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ABSTRACT

Suggesting that teaching in New Times requires that educators read and re/mediate the social relations, the cultural knowledges, and the relationships of power between adolescents and their social, biological, and semiotic universes, this collection of essays offers new ways of seeing and talking about adolescents and their literacies. Most of the essays were presented at the 1999 International Reading Association annual convention in San Diego, California, and all are reprinted from the February 2000 issue of the "Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy." The essays are all deliberate attempts to raise and "change the subject" of adolescent literacy by pushing the boundaries of the field. After an editorial by Allan Luke and John Elkins, essays in the book are: "Reinventing Adolescent Literacy for New Times: Perennial and Millennial Issues" (Elizabeth Birr Moje, Josephine Peyton Young, John E. Readence, and David W. Moore); "Teenagers in New Times: A New Literacy Studies Perspective" (James Paul Gee); "New Literacies in Teacher Education" (Carmen Luke); "Fandom and Critical Media Literacy" (Donna E. Alvermann and Margaret C. Hagood); "Critical Literacy in Australia: A Matter of Context and Standpoint" (Allan Luke); and "But Will It Work in the Heartland? A Response and Illustration" (Cynthia Lewis and Bettina Fabos). (RS)

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Re/mediating Adolescent Literacies

John Elkins
Allan Luke

CS 013 977

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Re/mediating Adolescent Literacies

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Allan Luke
John Elkins

Special themed issue: Re/mediating adolescent literacies

If we have done our work properly, you won't see a new method for teaching adolescent literacy in this the first issue of *JAAL* for the millennium. Instead, we hope that you'll find new ways of seeing and talking about adolescents and their literacies. Elizabeth Moje, Josephine Peyton Young, John Readence, and David Moore here make the case that adolescent literacies are practices situated in social and discourse ecosystems of unprecedented complexity and uncertainty. In the economies and institutions of what James Paul Gee calls "new capitalism," adolescents are faced with the challenges of navigating community and academic discourses and of balancing forms of identity, new work practices, and the demands of new technologies and popular cultures.

As teachers and as learners, we are on new, tricky, and shifting ground. The notion that our work as literacy educators is about the development of scientific "methods" can be traced back to the last turn of the century, when it was assumed that all educational problems could be solved with efficiency and precision. At this turn of the century, our position is different. Where once scientific certainty appeared to provide answers, we are now living in the midst of unprecedented diversity and complexity, dynamic change, and, often, chaos. Whether we are biologists, social planners, or educators, New Times are requiring sensitive, contextual, and flexible blends of cultural and scientific analysis.

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Adolescent literacy is about complex ecological and social relations between adolescents and their symbol-, language-, and discourse-rich environments. From this perspective, our work as teachers requires that we develop and shape new social, intellectual, and discourse relations to these worlds where adolescents live and work. We need to learn about these worlds, engaging the "fandom" that Donna Alvermann and Margaret Hagood describe in this issue. And we need to be continually intellectually upping the ante—negotiating and changing, enriching and augmenting our students' social and cognitive standpoints and relationships. This might entail engaging our students in the powerful "social languages" described by Gee, or the kinds of multiliteracies and critical literacies described by Carmen Luke, Allan Luke, and Cynthia Lewis and Bettina Fabos.

As an exercise in perspective, it is helpful to place adolescent literacies in a broader context of postwar studies of social class and school achievement, school improvement, and reform. From the work of James Coleman, Fred Newman, Theodore Sizer, and others, we know that unequal school achievement by social class and culture tends to establish itself strongly in the upper primary and middle school years. As Gee argues here, the current reading debate sidesteps consideration of the "fourth-grade slump," where the effects of early intervention and basic skills may begin to recede without critical engagement with intellectually demanding discourses.

To begin altering the patterns of adolescent literacy achievement, we must address complex issues around adolescents' access to and alienation from social institutions; their positions and identities within cultural fields of community life and work, education, and consumption; and their engagement with texts and discourses of power. Perhaps we are devoting too much time to discussing high-stakes testing when we should be discussing high-stakes discourses.

This approach might require a new set of metaphors for thinking about our teaching. In an important piece written in the mid-1980s, Michael Cole and Peg Griffin (1986) described the teaching of comprehension to at-risk readers. Their strategy involved generating a script for students to dramatically role-play "Question Asking Reading." Students received task cards that asked them to generate questions about texts rather than to answer them, a simple strategy that many teachers have used with elegant results. But what is important about this work is that Cole and Griffin developed an alternative vocabulary for talking about teaching. They referred to this strategy as a "sociohistorical approach to remediation," aimed at "systems reorganization" of the students' social relationships of power with the technology of print, and their social interactions around the text (p. 128).

Consider this string of terms:

Medium
Media
Mediate
Remediate

The term *medium*—the forgotten and neglected singular of the ubiquitous noun *media*—was used in the early part of the 20th century to refer to psychics who purported to be able to communicate with spirits. The concept refers to communication technologies that we use to mediate, frame, and scaffold our social relations with one another and with our material worlds. Language and literacy provide symbolic tools, resources, and means to conduct social and ecological relations. Cole and Griffin's view is that the teacher's task is to re/mediate struggling readers' relationships with texts, whether these are traditional print texts or those of new communications media. By this account, the aim of literacy instruction is not to use methods to fix deficits, remediation in the traditional sense used by special educators and reading specialists. Rather, literacy education involves staging the conditions for students to rethink and reenact their social and semiotic relations. It is about changing the ecology.

A very different paradigm for teachers' work may be necessary. As educational ecologists, we need to come to grips with the contextual variables in adolescent lives, all of the complex causes and consequences of any given action and intervention, and the multiple relations between media technologies that adolescents juggle every day. Used uncritically and insensitively, instructional methods and curriculum commodities may do little more than wrench ecosystems out of kilter. Teaching in New Times requires that we read and re/mediate the social relations, the cultural knowledges, and the relationships of power

between adolescents and their social, biological, and semiotic universes.

Most of the articles here were presented at the 1999 International Reading Association annual convention in San Diego, California, USA. Gee's article was commissioned specifically for this issue. The articles are all deliberate attempts to raise and "change the subject" of adolescent literacy by pushing the boundaries of the field. You will find them full of surprising and unusual ideas.

In *JAAL*, our aim is to bring to the table successful strategies, generative ideas, and, most important, new lenses for seeing adolescents, their worlds, and literacies. We think that it is vital that we not get talked into the enticing proposition that there is a method that will "solve" the problems of adolescent literacy and illiteracy. Learning to live together in this century is going to require that we turn diversity and complexity into productive resources. And by definition there won't be a single right way to do it.

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Cole, M., & Griffin, P. (1986). A sociohistorical approach to remediation. In S. deCastell, A. Luke, & K. Egan (Eds.), *Literacy, society and schooling* (pp. 87–109). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Elizabeth Birr Moje
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Reinventing adolescent literacy for new times: Perennial and millennial issues

Adolescents' literacy needs for the future are complex and demanding. The development of this age group's reading, writing, and language skills deserves serious and continuing attention.

In the editorial that commenced their tenure as Editors of the *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, Allan Luke and John Elkins (1998) called attention to unprecedented and disorienting changes in everyday literacy, and they proposed the need to reinvent literacy for new times. The 1999 position statement by the International Reading Association's Commission on Adolescent Literacy (Moore, Bean, Birdyshaw, & Rycik, 1999) contained these words calling for renewed attention to the literacy needs of adolescents:

> Adolescents entering the adult world in the 21st century will read and write more than at any other time in human history. They will need advanced levels of literacy to perform their jobs, run their households, act as citizens, and conduct their personal lives. They will need literacy to cope with the flood of information they will find everywhere they turn. They will need literacy to feed their imaginations so they can create the world of the future. In a complex and sometimes even dangerous world, their ability to read will be crucial. Continual instruction beyond the early grades is needed (p. 99).

These calls for action reaffirm beliefs that the reading, writing, and language development of youth beyond the primary grades deserves serious attention. A number of youth continue to struggle with basic processes of reading and writing beyond the third grade and require continued support in decoding, comprehending, and making meaning of the various texts they encounter in school and in their lives (Hiebert

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& Taylor, in press). For the many youth who have mastered the basic *processes* of reading and writing by the time they have reached fourth grade, there is still much to learn about the *practices* associated with literacy, especially the ones unique to different disciplines, texts, and situations (Gee & Green, 1998; Mosenthal, 1998). Additionally, the demands of a changing world necessitate the teaching and learning of specialized literacy practices. Luke and Elkins (1998) explained the necessity for such specialized practices as follows:

> [T]oday adolescence and adulthood involve the building of communities and identities in relation to changing textual and media landscapes. They involve finding a way forward in what is an increasingly volatile and uncertain job market, and negotiating a consumer society fraught with risk, where written and media texts are used to position, construct, sell, and define individuals at every turn and in virtually every domain of everyday life, in the shopping mall and the school, online, and face to face. (pp. 6–7)

The need for a renewed focus on the literacy learning of adolescents seems clear. Nevertheless, a number of scholars have noted that in recent years state and federal funding for middle and high school reading programs has decreased, and funding for research on the literacy and language learning of middle and high school-aged students is minimal (Moore et al., 1999; Vacca, 1998).

Cognizant of these concerns, we four authors engaged in a public conversation—a point and counterpoint—at the 1999 convention of the International Reading Association (IRA) in San Diego, California, USA. Our conversation, which was sponsored by the International Reading Association's Commission on Adolescent Literacy, addressed instructional, policy, and research issues currently deserving attention. It centered around four questions:

- What does *adolescent literacy* signal that *content reading* and *secondary reading* do not?
- What constitutes best practices in adolescent literacy?
- How can we meet the needs of marginalized readers in new times?
- Should critical literacy be part of our classrooms?

In the following sections, we present our responses to these questions. We do so in hopes of promoting a public conversation that will contribute to the literacy and content learning needs of today's youth. We begin by examining the label *adolescent literacy* in a historical context, inquiring into what this term offers in contrast to terms used previously.

What does *adolescent literacy* signal that *content reading* and *secondary reading* do not?

Labels are words or phrases that people use to identify or describe the person, place, or thing under discussion or examination. Labels also carry with them the *baggage*, or connotations, that people ascribe to them. For instance, the phrase *middle school student* describes a student approaching adolescence and in transition between elementary school and high school. Yet, as Finders (1998/1999) has demonstrated, this label also carries with it some emotional baggage that limits how we define and think of middle school students. The following quote by one preservice teacher provides an example of this by characterizing all middle school students as having raging hormones that interfere with learning:

> You know how adolescents are. They are just plain out of control. It's a stressful time with hormones surging and all. You take a nice kid, and then puberty kicks in, and the kid becomes nothing but a bundle of raging hormones. They begin noticing the opposite sex, and they lose all ability to reason. (p. 254)

Similarly, baggage comes with the terms *secondary reading* and *content reading* that limit how we think about literacy in middle and secondary schools. For example, secondary reading carries with it the notions of a lab setting, in which students who have not learned to read are cloistered, working on individual sets of grade-leveled materials supposedly designed to bring them up to grade level in their reading so they can be successful with their subject matter materials. This type of reading, unfortunately, has connotations of *remedial* reading, which limit its usefulness for the full range of adolescents' reading needs (Vacca, 1998).

Though the term *content reading* has existed since the days of William S. Gray and Arthur I.

Gates, it gained prominence in the 1970s with the advent of the cognitive revolution in psychology and the publication of Hal Herber's (1970) text, *Teaching Reading in Content Areas*. However, this term, too, brings baggage with it. Associated with content reading is the slogan "every teacher a teacher of reading," coined by Gray in 1937 when he chaired the National Committee on Reading. This slogan has influenced many content teachers to turn off to reading instruction within their content areas because they prefer to act as content teachers, not reading teachers.

Common definitions of content reading focus on enabling students to cope with the special reading materials and tasks encountered during the study of school subjects. It is reading instruction that is confined to the in-school literacy of content materials and, as Vacca (1998) pointed out, necessarily becomes "one-dimensional if what counts as literacy is limited to reading and writing in academic contexts" (p. xv). Thus, in the cases of both secondary reading and content reading, instructional methods or materials might not match the literacy needs of adolescents.

The term *adolescent literacy* points to distinctive dimensions of the reading and writing of youth. With the September 1995 issue, the name of the *Journal of Reading* was changed to the *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy* by the International Reading Association. In 1997 IRA also created the Commission on Adolescent Literacy to advise the organization on the policies related to literacy learning in adolescents' lives. Finally, as previously mentioned, Luke and Elkins (1998) have used the term in their call for a reinvention of literacy for new times, a way of focusing the readership on the question, "What does it mean to be an adolescent learning literacy as we approach the new millennium?"

The focus on adolescents takes the study of literacy beyond the constraints associated with secondary reading and content reading to a broad generative view. The publication *Reconceptualizing the Literacies in Adolescents' Lives* (Alvermann, Hinchman, Moore, Phelps, & Waff, 1998), for example, was guided by two principles learned from research that focused on adolescents: (a) adolescents want to be viewed as already possessing knowledge and skills and plans for the future, and (b) they want to participate in literacy practices suited to the ways they view their day-to-day lives. As a result of the various studies represented in this book, the editors and authors offered four themes for further research on adolescent literacy. First, adolescent literacy is more complex and sophisticated than what is traditionally considered in school-based literate activity. Adolescents have multiple literacies. Second, because adolescents have multiple literacies, they have multiple texts and an expanded notion of text; that is, they transcend adult-sanctioned notions of text forms. An expanded notion of what text is includes film, CD-ROM, the Internet, popular music, television, magazines, and newspapers, to name a few. Third, literacy plays an important role in the development of adolescents' individual and social identities. Readers act upon cues from what they read and how they perform in school to shape their emerging senses of self. Finally, adolescents need spaces in schools to explore and experiment with multiple literacies and to receive feedback from peers and adults. Schools advocating only school-sanctioned literacy do not currently provide such spaces.

Two recent publications epitomize this broad generative view of adolescent literacy. The first is a *JAAL* article published in the March 1999 issue by Tom Bean and his two adolescent daughters, Shannon and Kristen, entitled "Intergenerational Conversations and Two Adolescents' Multiple Literacies: Implications for Redefining Content Area Literacy" (Bean, Bean, & Bean, 1999). In this article Bean and his daughters described the multiple literacies the young women used over a 2-week period of time. In addition to their content textbooks, they used phones, pagers, cell phones, computers, electronic mail, the Internet, art, music, drama, film, video games, and digital aids of all types. Bean et al.'s point was simple: Being literate no longer means just learning to read and write traditional print texts; people need to be sociotechnically literate.

Similarly, in *Popular Culture in the Classroom: Teaching and Researching Critical Media Literacy*, Alvermann, Moon, and Hagood (1999) discussed the importance of increasing adolescents' awareness of the social, political, and economic messages coming at them from the popular media. The authors pointed out that these messages are largely ignored, and adolescents' desires to deal

with them are not accommodated in formal classroom settings. This book provides model lessons incorporating media literacies in middle-level classrooms.

In sum, using the phrase *adolescent literacy* permits professionals to leave behind some of the baggage that secondary literacy and content literacy bring with them. It also highlights the role of the adolescent in the teaching and learning of literacy. However, we offer two cautionary points about this phrase. First, we do not wish the phrase *adolescent literacy* to become a new buzzword. We view the use of this phrase as a serious and sincere attempt to be positive and inclusive in teaching and researching with adolescents. Second, we recognize that simply focusing on adolescents will not address all issues involved in teaching and learning in secondary schools. Focusing on the secondary school as an institutional context and on the content areas as epistemological contexts in which adolescents learn and use literacy is just as important as is understanding how adolescents use literacy in their lives. Thus, we believe that teaching and researching with adolescents must continue to examine how the contexts of secondary schools and content areas shape how adolescents and their teachers use literacy to teach and learn.

What constitutes best practices in adolescent literacy?

Ecological ways of thinking emphasize relationships. An ecologist who takes up a plant thinks about how it relates with the surrounding soil, climate, wildlife, and so on. When planning possible interventions, ecologists keep in mind systems that embed living things. Thinking like an ecologist about best practices in adolescent literacy emphasizes how reading and writing relate with the world. Literacy events such as taking notes from a textbook or downloading information from the Internet are seen amid a web of prior instruction, social and economic opportunities, educational policies, personal decision making, and so on.

Ecological ways of thinking can help reinvent adolescent literacy for new times by shedding light on claims of best practice and what works (e.g., see Davidson & Koppenhaver, 1993; Mastropieri & Scruggs, 1997; Truscott & Watts-Taffe, 1998). To our way of thinking, any unqualified claim that an educational practice is effective is quite a bit like claiming that watering plants is effective: It depends. The value of watering plants depends on the circumstances. Similarly, the value of K–W–L, Reciprocal Teaching, Questioning the Author, sustained silent reading, study guides, and reading and writing workshops depends on how these fit the teaching-learning situation. Thus, we assert that the notion of best practice should be considered ecologically, focusing on relationships in particular settings.

One way to address best practices ecologically is to link specific promising practices with generally accepted principles of teaching and learning. For example, one of the general principles that IRA recently adopted to serve as touchstones for school programs is "Adolescents deserve access to a wide variety of materials that they can and want to read" (Moore et al., 1999, p. 101). This principle offers a base for deriving reader-friendly practices without sanctioning specific ones. For instance, commission members apparently knew that school-mandated sustained silent reading programs sometimes are counterproductive due to conflicting expectations and experiences among students, teachers, administrators, and community members. By expressing a general guiding principle regarding wide reading, members sought to generate relevant practices that fit local settings. Educators might derive from this principle the practice of school-mandated sustained silent reading, but they also might derive practices such as literature across the curriculum, book clubs, and book conferences. Linking practices with principles guides actions sensibly and is an ecologically sound way to handle claims of best practice and what works in adolescent literacy.

A second ecologically minded approach to best practices is to be critical consumers. Critical consumers situate recommendations, determining where they are coming from and where they would like us to go. Critical consumers continually question claims, analyzing, comparing, and evaluating what is said:

- Who says a practice is best; what is the philosophical orientation of the author?
- What is the basis for the claim; how is effectiveness determined?

- Who does the practice benefit; is it possible for everyone to gain all the time?
- When is the practice appropriate?
- What is the advantage of one over another?
- Do the authors address educators as professional decision makers or as assembly line workers?

A critical stance toward adolescent literacy recommendations is especially important because a teaching practice that seems effective for all ages might not be so. For instance, a noteworthy *1998 NAEP Reading Report Card* result is that U.S. fourth-grade students who read self-selected books in school on a daily basis averaged higher reading scores than those without such opportunities (National Assessment of Educational Progress, 1999). However, this outcome did not hold for students at Grades 8 and 12. This national-level finding complicates decisions regarding adolescent literacy programs and compels additional investigation.

Those involved with adolescent literacy deserve a closer look at daily self-selected reading in the upper grades—along with numerous other aspects of adolescent literacy—yet most well-funded literacy research involves children in the lower grades. Tremendous attention has been devoted to *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children* (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998), the National Academy of Science's compilation of research and policy recommendations that was the centerpiece of a reading summit in the U.S. Yet *Preventing Reading Difficulties* joins the earlier nationally sponsored reports of Adams's *Beginning to Read* (1990), the Center for the Study of Reading's *Becoming a Nation of Readers* (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985), Chall's *Learning to Read: The Great Debate* (1983), and Bond and Dykstra's "The Cooperative Research Program in First Grade Reading Instruction" (1997) in ignoring adolescent readers. Additionally, the recently funded Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement (CIERA) concentrates on young children, although CIERA recently has initiated a strand of inquiry that examines reading achievement beyond the primary grades. Prominent programs for struggling readers such as Reading Recovery, Success for All, and the Kamehameha Project are for elementary-age children. We know of no comparably visible, well-documented, and well-supported efforts for adolescents.

It is important to realize that our profession tends to marginalize adolescent literacy. We educators need to keep our eyes open especially for adolescent literacy claims that are derived from work with young children. In brief, we need to be critical consumers, determining how well assertions about best practice fit our specific situations.

A final way an ecology of adolescent literacy helps consider assertions of best practice and what works involves interpersonal and personal dimensions. This perspective calls attention to the daily face-to-face interactions among individual adolescents, their teachers, and peers as they engage print; it addresses social-emotional climates. Directly addressing questions such as the following is important because adolescent literacy practices, such as literature discussion groups and study guides, play out differently in settings defined by the answers to these questions:

- Do classrooms display any passion for reading, writing, experiencing, and learning?
- Are expectations rigorous yet reasonable?
- Are individual learners' best interests foregrounded?
- Are reasons for teachers and learners committing themselves to literacy growth clear and convincing?
- Does a respectful and inviting community support self-expression?

Attention to the personal dimensions of literacy learning these questions address is crucial because they are wholly enmeshed with individuals' commitments and efforts. The most promising programs for struggling adolescent readers develop adolescents' personal resiliencies to factors limiting their academic success. These programs address literacy along with issues such as setting goals, resolving conflicts, staying within the law, and controlling alcohol and drugs. These programs enable teens to accommodate academic worlds with possible family, friendship, and community influences opposing the academy. They recognize potentially limiting forces such as work schedules and parenting responsibilities.

In sum, ecological ways of thinking can help reinvent adolescent literacy for new times by leading educators to incorporate practices with principles, determine the fit of effectiveness claims with particular situations, and address interpersonal and personal dimensions of literacy. An ecological per-

spective promotes the assertion that adolescent literacy teaching and learning should be considered in a broad context.

How can the needs of marginalized readers be met in new times?

Marginalized readers are those who are not connected to literacy in classrooms and schools. Specifically, we identify as marginalized adolescents those who are not engaged in the reading and writing done in school; who have language or cultural practices different from those valued in school; or who are outsiders to the dominant group because of their race, class, gender, or sexual orientation.

The question of how to meet the needs of marginalized readers is an extremely important one not only for the present but also for the new times that are ahead. Our existing secondary literacy research does not fully address the demands of the diverse groups of students and communities educators serve. If we cannot address these new literacies and the increasing diversity that we encounter, then we may find that more and more students will struggle to be successful in school. The suggestions offered here are meant to reshape secondary classrooms to offer literacies that connect to students' lives and to reposition marginalized youth in classrooms and schools.

First, listen to and watch young people in a variety of spaces and contexts, looking for what they *can* do and for ways to bring that proficiency into the classroom. Often, kids who appear to struggle in the classroom are completely different people outside of the classroom. Youth who sit slumped in their desks and scowl when prompted to read or write are often fluent in other languages; can navigate cities with ease; can relate specific scientific information learned from television or from field trips; and can weave together cultural tales, classic children's literature, and colorful family stories. For example, as part of a year-long study of two English classrooms, Moje, Willes, & Fassio (in press) attended a number of students' out-of-school activities. One evening the teacher, Debra Willes, accompanied Moje to an African American dance and drumming troupe performance in which two of the students performed. Willes and Moje were stunned to see one of the students, Mark, a young man who was considered by many teachers at the school to have an attention deficit, perform with intense concentration throughout the entire event.

As a result of this experience, Willes and Moje began to think carefully about how the classroom was structured and whether the teaching practice was in part responsible for Mark's struggles. They did not turn to new strategies for addressing his struggles; instead, they asked questions about the strategies offered in the classroom. They asked, for example, why Mark had abandoned a story about African American drumming after only one draft. This experience with Mark, for example, allowed them to bring the specialized cultural and musical knowledge that Mark possessed into a subsequent class discussion in ways that showed Mark that others valued his experience and that allowed him to extend his knowledge. Thus, rather than only building students' prior knowledge so that they can comprehend the texts presented to them, educators can begin with adolescents' funds of knowledge (Moll, 1994; Velez-Ibanez, 1988). This requires, however, that educators expand their knowledge of students by spending time with adolescents outside of classrooms.

Interdisciplinary project-based pedagogies are another way to support the literacy learning of marginalized students. Projects engage young people in group-based inquiry about questions or problems of interest to them. Typical features of project-based curricula include (a) driving questions that encompass worthwhile and meaningful content anchored in real-world problems; (b) investigations and artifact creation that allow students to learn concepts, apply information, and represent knowledge; (c) collaboration among students, teachers, and others in the community; and (d) use of technological tools (Krajcik, Blumenfeld, Marx, Bass, & Fredricks, 1998). Such approaches provide opportunities for discourse and represent an excellent way to learn content, especially for kids who struggle with print or who are not engaged in school learning (Marx, Blumenfeld, Krajcik, & Soloway, 1997). Most project-based approaches also build in community-based research and the communication of what kids have learned to real audiences (Mercado, 1993; Rosebery & Warren, 1998).

Many people wonder whether such approaches will really teach young people, especially those

who struggle with print, to read and write. This is a fair and important question. There is little in project-based pedagogy itself that specifically teaches reading and writing. Indeed, Krajcik et al. (1998) have raised questions about how to support students as they navigate project work, which is heavily dependent on multiple texts and on disciplinary and everyday discourse (see also Goldman, 1997). But as Guthrie et al. (1996) illustrated, content literacy strategies can be integrated into project-based approaches to support youth as they learn about new concepts and unfamiliar content (cf. Palincsar & Magnusson, in press). Thus, projects can provide a frame for content literacy strategies, a frame that allows young people to learn both learning strategies and content related to the authentic or essential questions that are of interest to them.

Interdisciplinary projects help to focus students and provide opportunities for young people who struggle with print to learn one concept in different ways (Hutchinson & Suhor, 1996). The student who does not understand a scientific concept when reading a scientific text may understand the concept if framed in literature or in the context of history. And acknowledging that each discipline has a unique set of social practices and accompanying discourses—ways of reading, writing, speaking, listening, believing, and acting—points to the usefulness for students to explore one concept from the perspective of different disciplines (Gee, 1996).

For example, Mark, the young man mentioned previously, could have engaged with a group of students in a cross-curricular project on music and history, a project that would have built on his existing knowledge, but also engaged him in new learning as he sought to answer questions about connections among the histories of various musical forms. With literacy strategies woven into the projects, Mark could have learned new content that built on his funds of knowledge, while also learning new skills to strengthen his reading and writing. Such a project could be integrated into music, history, mathematics (the mathematics of musical forms), science, English, art, and physical education courses. All students, and especially those who are at the margins in our classrooms, can benefit from opportunities to engage in deep, sustained research throughout the school day on questions of interest to them and their communities.

Our final recommendation is that we should draw from the texts adolescents value and offer them multiple forms of representation. Texts that young people choose, materials such as comic books or teen-zines, engage them (Alvermann et al., 1999). Many marginalized readers, especially those with learning disabilities, become so frustrated with their struggles to read that they give up or become resistant to reading traditional texts. But even marginalized readers and writers often read popular texts with fluency and enthusiasm. What's more, popular cultural and media texts are especially engaging with these readers and writers because they often include other kinds of representation (drawings, cartoons, comics, videos, icons). Students can also use alternative forms to represent their understandings of and meanings made from different content texts, which can enhance assessment of the knowledge that marginalized readers and writers construct from classroom work (cf. Eisner, 1994; Epstein, 1994). Mark, for example, was very interested in rap, jazz, and African drumming music. Such popular texts could bring Mark into the conversation and further develop his reading and writing skills.

Although we recommend using popular texts, it is important not to romanticize them. Such texts may be meaningful to students, but that does not mean that these texts should be invited uncritically into classrooms. Like print texts, these can be racist, classist, and sexist (cf. hooks, 1994), but that does not mean that teachers should avoid using them. We believe that even when texts, whether popular culture or classic texts, present images that reproduce negative stereotypes or practices the texts can be used productively, both to engage students and to raise questions about the way society works. The importance of questioning texts connects to the final issue raised in this commentary: the role of critical literacy in adolescents' classrooms and lives.

Should critical literacy be part of our classrooms?

During the last decade, the term *critical literacy* has had multiple meanings. Perhaps the most common meaning implies the use of higher order thinking—mental operations that involve inferring,

reasoning, and problem solving. Another use of the term *critical literacy* comes from Paulo Friere's (1970) work. He and his followers believed that literacy empowers people when it encourages them to actively question the social world and work toward social justice and equality. These two meanings inform our perspective on critical literacy. We also draw upon social linguistics (Fairclough, 1992; Gee, 1996) and critical perspectives such as feminist (Davies, 1993; Gilbert, 1997), critical (Apple, 1986), and poststructural (Foucault, 1975/1977; Luke, 1995/1996) theories.

Critical perspectives suggest a world of unequal power and resource distributions. Due, in part, to these unequal distributions, critical theorists reject the notion that objective and neutral productions and interpretations of texts are possible (Commeyras, 1994). Critical perspectives also assume that there is systematic privilege for certain groups of people based on their ethnicity, race, gender, and social class.

Based on these perspectives, critical literacy refers to an explicit awareness that the language of texts and readers' responses to texts are ideologically charged (Kempe, 1993). School texts are one means of enacting privilege. In other words, an author's language implicitly or explicitly produces certain meanings that tend to support particular social relations and institutions. Likewise, readers' responses to texts are informed by their past experiences as people of a particular gender, race, ethnicity, age, and social class. Critical literacy practices, therefore, involve the interrogation of texts to uncover the ideologies operating in them; they also involve the interrogation of the relationships among texts, readers, and the wider society in which ideologies are embedded (Fairclough, 1992; Freebody, Luke, & Gilbert, 1991).

The aim of critical literacy instruction is to enable readers to question texts and see how they provide selective versions of the world (Jongsma, 1991). Critical literacy activities examine how the language in spoken and written texts produces and reproduces race, ethnicity, social class, and gender positions. To illustrate how critical literacy practices can be used in adolescent classrooms we examine perspectives on gender and offer accompanying pedagogical practices.

Feminine and masculine practices are constructed in and through textual practices (Walkerdine, 1990). These practices become common sense and appear natural as they are constantly repeated (Butler, 1990; Gilbert, 1997; West & Zimmerman, 1987). Think for a moment: Are all boys naturally brave, athletic, and heroic? Are girls naturally more gentle and caring than boys? From a critical perspective, the answer to these questions is no; the language of texts often constructs femininity and masculinity in these rigid, stereotypical ways. Because these practices were constructed over time, they can be deconstructed.

Critical literacy opens up possibilities for adolescents to explore how their gender identities are defined by the language of texts and, in turn, how their constructions of gender influences their interpretations of texts. It provides a framework in which adolescents can explore the language that constructs and maintains dominant practices of femininity and masculinity; it makes visible the choices adolescents have for constructing their own gendered identities.

Specific critical literacy activities are necessary if readers are to become aware of how texts construct their gender identities in stereotypical ways (Gilbert, 1997). These activities range in purpose from recognizing sexist language in TV commercials or magazine advertisements; to noticing the inequitable representations of men and women in books or movies; to seeking to break down the stereotypic positioning of men and women (Gilbert, 1997); to determining whose version of reality is presented and whose is excluded (Lankshear & Knobel, 1997). Critical literacy activities might include close textual and linguistic analyses. For instance, one activity could be comparing the verbs selected to represent male and female athletes in newspaper articles. Articles about male athletes often contain more action verbs, while articles about female athletes contain more linking and passive verbs (Kempe, 1993). In this way, masculinity is constructed as more active than femininity. By comparing the verbs, students can identify how the author's word choice affects the way gender is constructed in texts.

Having students participate in critical literacy activities is not the same as forcing attitudinal change. Critical literacy activities are designed to make available space for students to consider multiple meanings and constructions of gender (Martino, 1995). Critical literacy activities can teach

readers to resist "the power of print" (Janks, 1993, p. iii) and not to simply accept everything they read. Once they become aware of how texts manipulate them, adolescent students can become critical consumers and producers of text who challenge dominant meanings and realize that there is more than one way to read texts and their world. This is hard work, but it is work that could lead to a more fair and just world.

On reinventing adolescent literacy for new times

Our comments in the preceding sections are based on a deep respect for adolescents and on a conviction that their literacy needs for new times are complex and demanding. We are advocating a challenging, responsive literacy curriculum that puts adolescents first, yet one that pushes adolescents to learn new things, to have new experiences, and to read their worlds in new ways. This curriculum differs from the student-centered approaches often recommended because it urges adolescents to stretch their thinking beyond their immediate backgrounds and experiences while honoring those backgrounds and experiences.

Many teachers, teacher educators, and university researchers have expressed concerns that state and local literacy standards might limit them from facilitating the kind of challenging, responsive teaching and learning presented here. A concern over the potentially oppressive nature of standards is understandable because standards can easily become a way to deprofessionalize and control educational practice. But if standards are used as guides for instruction rather than assessments for outcomes, then they can be useful (Cunningham, 1999).

Consider, for example, how doctors, dentists, lawyers, and clinical psychologists use standards. They (not politicians) develop and approve professional guidelines for their actions. If an outcome of their practice is unfavorable but the standards of good practice are followed, then these professionals are not liable for malpractice. Because these professionals are held responsible for applying the appropriate standards of their practice, they devote considerable attention to constructing and reconstructing the practices and to developing their proficiencies with them so that, for example, doctors can be responsive to their patients and serve them as they prevent, diagnose, and address health issues. In the same way, educators can use state and national standards as guidelines rather than dicta for generating challenging, responsive literacy teaching for adolescents. We offer this analogy not to promote a medical model of educational practice, but rather to promote a *professional* model of practice.

Our conversations among the panelists and with the audience at the 1999 IRA convention pointed to the need for teachers and researchers who work with adolescents to take action, to become politically oriented and more vocal, as we engage in work with adolescent literacy. It is time for educators to take a strong stand about adolescent literacy and assume the lead in developing and implementing practices that respond to the ever-changing needs of adolescents in schools, and that prepare them to be active participants in the world.

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James Paul Gee

Teenagers in new times: A new literacy studies perspective

The ways that teenagers use distinctive social languages have consequences for the changing nature of school, literacy, and society.

This article looks at how teenagers from different social classes fashion themselves in language as different kinds of people (Hacking, 1986), oriented in quite different ways toward the "new times" (Luke, 1998) stemming from the "new capitalism" (Gee, Hull, & Lankshear, 1996). However, first I will show that what I have to say here is relevant to literacy by arguing against a perspective that sees literacy as a stand-alone mental ability and arguing for one that sees it as inextricably connected to "identity work." After a brief discussion of the new kinds of workers and workplaces arising in the new capitalism, I will turn to the teenagers themselves and a discussion of their discourse practices.

Literacy is not general

The last few decades have witnessed a significant debate over the nature of literacy. On one side are those who see literacy as a general and self-contained ability to write and read English or some other language. On the other side of the debate is a movement now sometimes referred to as "the New Literacy Studies" (Barton, 1994; Gee, 1996a; Street, 1995). This movement denies that literacy is ever general or self-contained. It denies, as well, that literacy involves anything as big and general as "English." Rather, people create from the grammatical resources of a language like English (and, some-

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times, simultaneously from other languages as well), quite specific sublanguages, what I will call *social languages*.

Social languages are distinctive in that they are used to enact, recognize, and negotiate different socially situated identities and to carry out different socially situated activities. However, this identity and activity work is never done by language alone. To enact a socially situated identity and activity (e.g., being an urban gang member warning another gang member off one's turf or being a particle physicist warning colleagues off one's research area) specific ways with words (social languages) are fully integrated with specific ways of thinking, believing, valuing, acting, interacting, and, often, ways of coordinating and being coordinated by other semiotic systems, other people, various objects, tools, settings, and technologies (Knorr Cetina, 1992; Latour, 1987, 1991). When we talk about specific social languages being integrated with this other nonlanguage "stuff" to enact, recognize, or negotiate identities, I will say that not just social languages, but *Discourses* (with a capital *D*) are at play (e.g., the discourse of being a gang member of a certain sort, or being a cutting-edge particle physicist of a certain sort, or being a recognizable sort of first grader in Ms. Smith's classroom) (Gee, 1992, 1996a).

Let me give one quick example of different social languages at work. First, a young woman, telling the same story to her parents and to her boyfriend, says to her parents at dinner, "Well, when I thought about it, I don't know, it seemed to me that Gregory should be considered the most offensive character." Later, she says to her boyfriend, "What an ass that guy was, you know, her boyfriend." To her parents, she uses a distinctive grammar to enact the situated identity of a certain culturally distinctive type of class-based educated person; to her boyfriend, she uses a different, but equally distinctive, grammar to enact the situated identity of a certain culturally distinctive type of person achieving intimacy and solidarity.

It is certainly one of the deepest sources of inequality in schools that poorer and minority children are often in classrooms where literacy is delivered as if it were some sort of general and stand-alone thing. Indeed, many recent reports in the U.S. have called for just such a stand-alone view of literacy, especially for so-called at-risk children. But these reports quickly contradict themselves, caught up by the fact that literacy leads to nothing when it is delivered in a self-contained and general way.

For example, the 1998 National Academy of Science's report *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children* (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998; see Gee, in press, for a response) devoted the lion's share of its focus to the importance of early phonemic awareness and sustained overt instruction on phonics for learning what the report refers to as "real reading"—that is, decoding, word recognition, and comprehension of literal meaning of text (a very stand-alone definition of reading, indeed). However, the report acknowledged (p. 78) the well-known issue of the "fourth-grade slump," the long-standing problem that large numbers of minority and poor children who pass reading tests in the early grades fail to learn content well at the fourth grade and later. The report acknowledged, as well, that children "living in high-poverty areas tend to fall further behind, regardless of their initial reading skills level" (p. 98).

If children who pass reading tests fall behind by fourth grade and fall further and further behind "regardless of their initial reading skill level," how, then, can we help them by increasing their initial skill level at "real reading"? On this the report was silent. The New Literacy Studies would argue that these children, in fact, never learned to read in the sense of being able to actively recruit distinctive oral and written social languages for learning within socioculturally recognizable and meaningful academic Discourses. In turn, this is what the New Literacy Studies would argue that literacy is, or should be, all about.

There is, however, yet a deeper problem here. We are living in new times. These new times are changing whether and how schools are relevant to the acquisition of "dominant discourses"—that is, Discourses that give one access to power, social goods, and relative freedom from oppression in our new capitalist, global, high-tech world, for poor and rich alike (Luke, 1998; Myers, 1996).

The new capitalism

I want now to sketch an all too quick version of the standard story about the "new capitalism" (Gee, Hull, & Lankshear, 1996). I am not con-

cerned with whether this story is true or not, but with the fact that various economic, business, and political forces are trying to make it true through school and work reform efforts. The old industrial capitalism was about mass producing standardized products for heavily controlled mass markets. In the new global, hypercompetitive, science-and-technology-driven capitalism, products and services are created, perfected, and changed at ever faster rates. What makes a product distinctive is no longer the stuff of which it is made or even its function. After all, in a hypercompetitive world, everyone is producing high-quality products or going out of business. What makes a product or service distinctive is the "knowledge work" that has gone into designing, producing, and marketing it on time and on demand for just the right niche market (Drucker, 1993; Frank & Cook, 1995; Imparato & Harari, 1994).

The highest and most important form of knowledge and skill in the new capitalism is what I will call *sociotechnical designing*; that is, designing products and services so that they create or speak to specific consumer identities and values (niches), designing better ways to organize the production and delivery of products and services, designing ways to shape consumer identities and values, and designing ways to transform products and markets based on consumer identities and values (Hamel & Prahalad, 1994; Peters, 1994; Smith, 1995). All this design work is heavily social and contextual and semiotic, often involving manipulation of symbols of identity.

In turn, the highest and most important form of sociotechnical designing involves designing *new workplaces* and *new workers*. New workplaces are designed to leverage knowledge from workers' day-to-day practices. In the new capitalism, thanks to changing technology and the pace of innovation, the knowledge that front-line workers gain in ongoing practice as they flexibly adapt to new circumstances is more valuable than explicit knowledge based on theories and past practices, both of which go out of date too quickly. Workers, who are now fewer in number, work longer and with less supervision amidst fast-paced change that often outstrips individual knowledge. These new capitalist workers must work in teams (where they supervise one another) that collaboratively, interactively, and continuously design and redesign their work processes, functions, and relationships (Boyett & Conn, 1992; Hammer & Champy, 1993; Lipnack & Stamps, 1993; Senge, 1991).

In the new capitalism, hierarchy is flattened (there are no "bosses" and "workers," only "partners"); the business becomes a network of interacting units (a distributed system). In the ideal new capitalist business, then, local units (both individuals and small business groups) control their own actions, combining and uncombining in flexible ways project by project. Like a dynamically flowing liquid, teams and networks form and reform on demand in a symbiotic relationship with the customer and the market. There are no discrete stable individuals, only ensembles of skills stored in a person, assembled for a specific project (to be reassembled for other projects), and shared with others within "communities of practice" (Gee, 1996b; Kelly, 1998). Individuals are not defined by fixed essential qualities, such as intelligence, culture, or skill; rather, they are (and must come to see themselves as) an ever-changing "portfolio" of rearrangable skills acquired in their trajectory through "project space"—all the projects they have been involved with (Handy, 1994; Peters, 1992). You *are* your projects.

If the old capitalism had a deep investment in creating standardized, stable identities (Leach, 1993), the new capitalism has a deep investment in creating what we might call "shape-shifting portfolio people," at least for more privileged rungs of the new capitalism. Shape-shifting portfolio people live to fill up their portfolios with attributes, achievements, and skills that they can flexibly rearrange as things change and new contexts demand that they redefine themselves.

It has been argued that there are, or will be, three basic slots for people in the new capitalism (Gee, Hull, & Lankshear, 1996; Reich, 1992): (a) symbol analysts, the professionals who design, implement, and transform networks and systems and can reap large rewards because they have high-level sociotechnical knowledge; (b) enchanted workers, the front-line (product or service) workers who are paid lean wages, though they may get bonuses for productivity, but who must, nonetheless, collaboratively and proactively understand and continually redesign their work as a whole process; and (c) backwater workers, who work, often part-time or on demand, for very

minimal benefits and who do the remaining old capitalist work, low-level service jobs, or jobs that require brute strength, but little (value adding) knowledge.

A pressing issue is how schools are equipping (or sorting) children for these three slots. The proponents of back to basics claim their pedagogies will equip at-risk children to be enchanted workers, but their pedagogies appear to be excellent devices for the production of backwater workers. Current school-reform "thinking pedagogies" (e.g., Bruer, 1993; Perkins, 1992) claim to give children equal access to the top rungs of the new capitalism, but often appear to be implemented in two different versions. Though both versions often involve teamwork, one version focuses on technical social languages and deep conceptual understandings for future symbol analysts, while the other focuses on collaborative talk and skills, often in everyday language, for future enchanted workers.

Two kinds of teenagers

I want now to take up the sorts of issues I've mentioned from a different angle. I'll do so by looking briefly at interviews my colleagues and I have conducted with middle school teenagers (around 13 years old) from different socioeconomic classes (Gee, 1999; Gee, Allen, & Clinton, in press; Gee & Crawford, 1998). In these interviews, I argue, we can see how some teenagers (and not others) fashion themselves as shape-shifting portfolio people fit for the new capitalist world, as well as how they use a particular school-based (literate) social language to distance themselves from those who are not becoming such people.

I will concentrate here on just two types of teenagers in our data, juxtaposing three teens from working class families in a postindustrial urban area in Massachusetts, USA, where traditional working class jobs are fast disappearing (Sandra, Jeremy, and Maria); and three teenagers from upper middle class families, teens who attend elite public schools in Massachusetts suburban communities and have parents who are doctors, lawyers, or university professors (Ted, Karin, and Emily). All teenagers' names are pseudonyms. I am not trying to set up an essentially binary distinction here—these are, of course, two poles of a continuum. Nor am I appealing to any essentialized notion of social class. I am using the terms here informally to mean no more than what I have just said about these two groups of teenagers.

Our interviewers asked teenagers questions about their lives, homes, communities, interests, and schools, as well as their views on issues like racism and sexism. Each teenager was interviewed by a research assistant who was familiar with the teenager and his or her environment. The teens viewed the interviewer as a school-based (indeed, college-based) person. In fact, we were interested in whether and how each teenager would (or wouldn't) accommodate to this academic identity. Of course, we fully realize that when we study identities emerging in interviews, we are, unavoidably, studying something that is coconstructed by the teen and the interviewer.

We use a variety of different discourse analysis tools on our interview data, each tool giving a different "snapshot" of the teenagers' language in our interviews. We can discuss here—and only at a superficial level—just a few such snapshots. Let us, then, first consider statements where the teenager speaks in the first person as an *I*. We call such statements I-Statements. Obviously, where people choose to speak as an *I* is consequential for how they are here and now fashioning themselves in and through language.

Our analyses consider the following kinds of I-Statements: (a) cognitive statements about thinking and knowing (e.g., "I think…", "I know…", "I guess…"); (b) affect/desire statements about desiring and liking (e.g., "I want…", "I like…"); (c) state and action statements about states or actions of the speaker ("I am mature," "I hit him back," "I paid the bill"); (d) ability and constraint statements about being able or having to do things ("I can't say anything to them," "I have to do my paper route"); and (e) what we will call achievement statements about activities, desires, or efforts that relate to mainstream achievement, accomplishment, or distinction ("I challenge myself," "I want to go to MIT or Harvard").

Table 1 shows the distribution of different types of I-Statements in terms of the percentage of each type out of the total number of I-Statements the interviewee used (thus, e.g., 32% of all Sandra's I-Statements were affect/desire statements, such as "I don't like them").

Table 1
Percentage of I-statements in each type and category

	Working class			Upper middle class		
	Sandra	Jeremy	Maria	Emily	Ted	Karin
Category A						
Affect/ desire	32	21	28	8	12	13
Ability and constraint	7	7	7	1	4	2
State and action	39	49	40	24	18	7
Subtotal	78	77	75	33	28	22
Category B						
Cognitive	22	23	23	54	50	65
Achievement	0	.5	2	13	22	13
Subtotal	22	23	25	67	72	78

In Table 1, I have subtotaled the scores for affect/ desire, ability and constraint, and state and action I-Statements (Category A), and the scores for cognitive and achievement I-Statements (Category B). When we make such combinations, we find something interesting and suggestive. The working class teens are high in Category A and low in Category B, while the upper middle class teens are low in A and high in B. This is typical of all our data thus far. Why should this be so?

When we look at what the teenagers actually say when they speak in the first person, as well as at other analyses of our data, we argue that Table 1 is a first indicator that something like the following is true: In these interviews, the working class teens fashion themselves as immersed in a *social, affective, dialogic world of interaction*; the upper middle class teens fashion themselves as immersed in a world of *information, knowledge, argumentation, and achievements built out of these*.

Across our data, the working class teens' cognitive statements virtually always assume a background of dialogue and interaction. For example, when Sandra said things like "I think it is good [her relationship with her boyfriend]" or "I think I should move out [of the house]," she made clear elsewhere in her interview that other people don't like her boyfriend and that there is a debate about who should move out of the house. Or when Maria said "I think I'm so much like a grown up," she has made it completely clear that this is a response to an ongoing struggle with her parents who will not give her the independence she wants.

On the other hand, the upper middle class teens' cognitive statements are mostly explanatory claims within an explicit or assumed argumentative structure, rather than directly dialogic and interactional. For example, when Emily said, "I think it's okay for now [living in her current town]," nothing in her interview suggests that this is in reaction to anything anyone else has said or thought. It is simply her assessment of her own autobiographical trajectory toward her own goals for success. When Karin said, "I think they want me to be successful," nothing in her interview suggests that this is in response to any doubts or debates about the matter—far from it, because Karin said repeatedly how supported and well understood she was by her parents.

If we turn to the teenagers' affective I-Statements and action I-Statements, we find that the upper middle class teens very often talk about relationships and activities in ways that seem to have a direct or indirect reference outside of themselves to achievement, success, or distinction in the adult world and in their futures. For example, Emily's interview made it clear that when she said things like "Now I want to go to Europe," "I want to go to MIT," or "I like backpacking and outdoor stuff," the going to Europe, backpacking,

and other similar activities mentioned were like items on a résumé that would help toward getting into schools like MIT. Karin's remarks (e.g., "I don't really care what people think of me," "I feel pretty accomplished," "I like to be comfortable with my work [what she will do in the future]") were, in the context of her whole interview, heavily focused on what her present desires, feelings, and activities would portend for the future in terms of achievement and success.

The working class teens, on the other hand, seem to talk about affect and desires, as activities and relationships in and of themselves and as part and parcel of social interaction, without such a sidelong glance at their implications for a future of "achievement" (e.g., Maria said things such as "I like hanging around with my aunt"; Sandra said things like "I wanted to say 'kinda, kinda not. How could you kinda, kinda not?'"). A minor, but perhaps emblematic, example comes from our category of action I-Statements: Karin said things like "I do soccer and gymnastics and tennis" or "I do tennis in Holiston." Our working class teens never used this way of talking, but said such things as "I do dishes" (Maria) or "I play football" (Jeremy).

Another indicator that our working class teens fashion themselves as immersed in a social, affective, dialogic world of interaction, while our upper middle class teens fashion themselves as immersed in a world of information, knowledge, argumentation, and achievements built out of these, is how members of each group orient themselves toward narrative. The working class teens use the narrative form far more than the upper middle class teenagers. The percentage of lines in each teenager's transcript that are involved in a narrative are given in Table 2:

Table 2
Percentage of lines in each transcript that are involved in a narrative

Working class			Upper middle class		
Sandra	Jeremy	Maria	Emily	Ted	Karin
57%	35%	36%	17%	12%	8%

There is a flip side of this narrative contrast: The upper middle class teenagers often use a "viewpoint and argument giving" social language that is expository, abstract, and elaborated. This sort of social language is all but missing from the working class teens' interviews. But a deeper look at the interviews seems to show that when the upper middle class teens are engaged in such talk, they are often rhetorically clothing their own very personal interests and concerns in a more distanced language than the working class teenagers typically use. At the very least, they are probably very much aware of the connections between their "distanced arguments" and their personal interests, values, and favored themes or motifs. For example, consider Jeremy (working class) in relation to Brian and Karin (upper middle class):

Interviewer: *Is there racism [in society]?*

Jeremy: Like colored people I don't, I don't like. I don't like Spanish people most of 'em, but I like, I like some of 'em. Because like if you, it seems with them, like they get all the welfare and stuff. Well, well, white people get it too and everything but, I just... And then they think they're bad and they're like.... They should speak English too, just like stuff like that.

Interviewer: *Why do you think there are relatively few Hispanic and African American doctors?*

Brian: Well, they're probably discriminated against, but, but it's not really as bad as, as people think it is, or that it once was. Because, uh, I was watching this thing on TV about this guy that's trying to.... How colleges and some schools have made a limit on how many white students they can have there, and a limit—and they've increased the limits on how many black and Hispanic students they have to have. So, a bunch of white people [rising intonation] ...e getting—even if they have better grades than the black or Hispanic student, the black or Hispanic student gets in because they're black or Hispanic. So, I think that that kinda plays an effect into it.

Interviewer: *Just say that it's a really, really poor neighborhood, um, or a ghetto school...*

do you feel like somebody who goes to school there would have a chance, um, to succeed or become what they want to become?

Karin: Not as good as they would in a good school system. It depends on—I know that they probably don't. If they don't have enough money, they might not have enough to put into the school system and not—may not be able to pay the teachers and, um, the good supplies and the textbooks and everything. So maybe they wouldn't—they probably wouldn't have the same chance. But, I believe that every person has equal chances, um, to become what they want to be.

Jeremy personalized his response and subordinated his argumentative "facts" to his by no means distanced viewpoint on minorities. Brian did not, at first, seem to personalize his response in the same way. However, in an interview replete with worries about "making it" in terms of going to a top college and having a successful career, there is little doubt that Brian's response was quite personal nonetheless (note also the rising emphatic intonation on "a bunch of white people"). While he most certainly could have stated his concerns as directly related to his own fears of affirmative action negatively affecting his plans and desires, he chose not to.

Karin, after having spent a good deal of time discussing how good her school is and how important this fact is to her future, was then asked about the connection between poor schools and success. She first offered an argument, consistent with her views on her own school and future, that such schools will lower children's chances of success. However, she then contradicted her own argument when she said that she believed that every person has equal chances to become what they want to be. Given the fact that Karin spent a great deal of her interview talking about her hopes and fears for a successful future, it is easy to interpret her remark "they probably wouldn't have the same chance" as meaning the "the same chance as *me*." Karin's "distanced" argument has come too close to rendering the grounds of worth and distinction (of the sort she seeks) a matter of chance, or, worse yet, injustice.

Thus, we would concede that the upper middle class teens' language often appears more "elaborated" (Bernstein, 1974). But, we would argue that this is not because they are more literate than the working class teens in some general sense. Rather, we argue, it is because, in many parts of their interviews, the upper middle class teens use a distinctive social language strategically to distance themselves from everyday social interaction, to mediate what they say through their relationship to (and fears about) achievement and success, and sometimes to cloak or defer their material interests with abstract arguments.

We have some indication that our upper middle class teens distance themselves from issues like racism even when it is the overt content of their course work. Five of our upper middle class teens had the same social studies teacher, a man who taught an overtly politicized antiracist curriculum. This was all of these teens' favorite teacher. As Karin said, "We have learned so much and my parents always tell me how we have to learn that not everyone is just like [our town], 'cause it's [a] pretty sheltered town." Karin liked this teacher because "he's pretty worldly, because he lived in, um, a village in Africa for a couple of years, and then he taught in the Canary Islands for a couple years." What she valued in this social studies class, it seems, is how it offered her access to worldliness. And, indeed, several of our upper middle class teens worried about how and whether they were "worldly" enough given the "sheltered" nature of their towns (the teens used just these terms).

Another teenager said that in this teacher's class "stereotypes" were "kind of a big thing that we learned about a lot this year." This teen went on to say that he had learned that "people just have an oversimplified point of view, and judge people usually in a negative way that they shouldn't.... That's what society does to certain groups of people, and which isn't fair, I don't think." The social studies teacher made it "very clear" that the students should not stereotype people, "and now, we can't call things 'weird', we can't call them 'odd'; the word we use, have to use is 'different'." *Different* becomes the "worldly" way to say *weird* or *odd*.

Despite what this student had to say about his social studies class, much later in his interview, when he was asked about racism, he said "there's

not a lot of racism around here, but some places around the world I think there's racism." When he recalled an instance of a fellow student using a racial epithet, he said "I mean, it's just one of those things that you don't mean to say that just happens, it's not like he's really a racist person at all." He concluded the racism topic by saying, "particularly now, I mean, racism, it's not *that* big of a problem anymore, it's not like it's *real* big.... I think [African Americans] have a fair chance."

These students do not appear to orient their attention in this class primarily to its "radical" content. They certainly do not use the course to recruit an academic social language with which to reflect on their own privileged circumstances. Rather, they appear to orient to the "cultural capital" the class offers them to construct themselves as "worldly people" despite their limited access to the realities of a diverse world (and they all acknowledge they have actually experienced very little cultural diversity). Ironically, the social studies teacher worried about losing his job because of how "radical" his class was. He need have had no such fears.

Some final thoughts

The upper middle class teens, in our interviews, seemed to speak out of a "lifeworld" that has been deeply interpenetrated by the social languages and discourses of professional families, schools, and public sphere institutions. They already fashion themselves in terms of (anxiety-filled) movement through "achievement space" wherein they accrue skills, attributes, attitudes, and achievements as capital that will make them worthy of success. We see here, I believe, children (after all, they have not yet even gone to high school) on their way to being shape-shifting portfolio people in the new capitalism. I have argued above that this is an identity integral to many of the literacies and Discourses on which symbol analysts will draw in the new capitalism.

The working class teens, in our interviews, seem to speak out of a lifeworld oriented toward dialogic interaction and much less penetrated by school-based and public sphere Discourses. In other work (Gee & Crawford, 1998), I have argued that this is so, in part, because they often view schools and other public sphere institutions, and sometimes the adults in their own families, as representing an authority that rarely seems to respond to them in affective, dialogic, or interactional ways, but does so mostly in terms of decontexualized facts, laws, and rules (and stand-alone literacy).

My argument, in the end, is this: The sorts of identities these teenagers fashion in our interviews, and the ways in which they use distinctive social languages, are deeply consequential for the changing nature of school and society. It is ironic, perhaps, that while current sociocritical efforts at school reform value an interactional, dialogic stance (often associated with the much-cited Mikhail Bakhtin), we find this stance primarily in our working class teens who face a future without a stable working class. On the other hand, while current cutting-edge "thinking pedagogies" value conceptually explicit social languages connected to academic discourses, we find such social languages used by our upper middle class teens to distance themselves from the social, cultural, and political inequalities of our new times and to hold a firm belief in their own essential merit and worth, despite a ready acknowledgment of their very privileged circumstances. Literacy as "the ability to read and write" won't purchase much here. What is at stake—as Paulo Freire knew so well—is the creation, in and out of schools, of social languages (literacies) through which all of us can read and write more equitable selves and worlds.

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Carmen Luke

New literacies in teacher education

A teacher education course at the University of Queensland combines media-cultural studies with information technologies and offers new approaches for literacy learning in the new millennium.

Traditionally, media studies have been the domain of the English and language arts classrooms. Cultural studies, although also concerned with the politics of image and text representations, have not made significant inroads into school-based media studies. Computer studies have focused principally on the teaching of operational how-to skills, and technology studies are generally absent from the curriculum or else tucked away as a unit of study within social studies.

Given the current drift toward media convergence, it is my contention that media, cultural, computer, and technology studies can no longer be taught independently of one another. Moreover, the fervor with which computer education has been embraced and the relatively modest incursions media and cultural studies have made in mainstream curriculum suggest that the blending of media-cultural studies with information technology (IT) studies can inject new life into both fields of study. IT education can benefit from the theoretical and critical analytic orientation of media-cultural studies that, in turn, can be mainstreamed through linkage with computer education in schools today.

A key editorial theme in the *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy* has been that book- and print-based literacies, and the industrial model of schooling built around book culture, are no longer wholly adequate in a changing information, social, and cultural environment. In light of the accelerated shift toward electronically medi-

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ated communication and social exchange in almost all facets of everyday life, there is a need for an expanded form of literacy. What I want to anticipate in this article are the possibilities for new approaches to literacy education that blend and synthesise technologies. Media studies must contend with new information technologies, and computer education needs the critical analytic tools and cultural framing approach typical of media studies. Further, I would ask, What better site to begin developing new frameworks for knowledge and critical literacy than in teacher education, among those who will be teaching students 20 and 30 years into the new millennium?

Here I describe how a recombination of these fields into a next generation teacher education course can give students the theoretical frameworks and practical applications for the critical and analytic principles of media-cultural studies in teaching with, and about, new information technologies. I will begin with a brief outline of the traditional features of each content and disciplinary area. I then outline the teaching and learning aspects of this course and highlight the conceptual and analytic tools students apply in their assignments. Throughout, I provide snapshots of student conversations taken from their e-tutorials as they debate various course topics. Student names have been removed from all student mail, although students are required to address each other in each group and to identify themselves in personalized sigfiles. E-mail protocol and Internet code of conduct are two of the first lessons in this course.

At the start of term, 300 students were advised that all e-mails would be archived and that teaching staff might include some e-mails in future scholarly publications, with all personal identifying details removed. Those who did not wish to consent to the publication of their e-mails were asked to sign a Permission Not Granted form. All e-mails published in this article have student consent.

Media and computer literacy

Media studies focus on the critical deconstruction of media texts such as print and imagery in popular magazines, TV programs and advertising, movies, billboards, and related forms of media representations. The usual focus is on the study of genres, narrative structures, persuasive appeals, and semiotic analyses of imagery (e.g., Buckingham, 1998; Buckingham & Sefton-Green, 1994; Hart, 1991; Luke, 1997). Whereas media studies focus on text imagery, cultural studies focus on the social uptake of those texts. A less common adjunct to media studies, cultural studies focus on the study of youth and viewer-reader cultures that form around popular cultural and mass media texts (e.g., music, daytime or prime-time soap opera fans, Barney groupies, or *Sesame Street* play groups). Cultural studies extend to analysis of childhood and youth subcultures' style and taste, the semiotics of identity construction through in-group behaviors, attitudes, style of dress, and so on.

In the 1980s, cultural and media studies focused heavily on critique—both of texts and the cultures that form around them. In the 1990s, principally through the work of British media studies scholars (e.g., Buckingham & Sefton-Green, 1994; Lusted, 1991), this disciplinary focus on students' self-critique was abandoned in favor of analysis of the politics of pleasure and a focus on production (of media texts) rather than a sole focus on deconstruction. Instead of getting students to critique the very texts and images that they like (and from which they derive a fair amount of pleasure), this shift toward encouraging students (and teachers) to reflect on what kinds of pleasure people derive from various media forms and texts enabled a move toward analysis of the "politics of location" (see Alvermann & Hagood, this issue, pp. 436–446). That is, the aim is to provide students with the critical analytic tools to understand reader and viewer diversity of reading positions and sociocultural locations and differences that influence affinities to, or preferences for (and pleasures derived from), particular kinds of media forms and messages.

This shift was a useful corrective to the sorts of ideology critique underpinning 1970s and 1980s media studies that assumed students were duped consumers of mass culture, unable to read through and between the lines. Teachers, on the other hand, were assumed to be able to rescue students from naïve readings by providing the analytic toolbox to produce ideologically correct, and teacher-preferred, meanings and interpretations. In this model, students ended up doing critical work in line with what the teacher wanted, thereby bypassing any engagement with the

politics of situated readings, the messy issues of pleasure, or student-authored media productions.

In all, media and cultural studies have achieved a greater presence in the English and language arts classroom over the last decade (Luke, 1999). However, Australian teachers' anecdotal and curriculum evidence suggests that media studies still tend to be seen as an add-on unit to more mainstream literary content, or as a remedial strategy to capture reluctant readers or at-risk students for whom traditional literacy instruction has failed. Equally significant is the general failure of media studies to make any substantial inroads across the curriculum. For example, media analysis of representations of science, scientists, or scientific discoveries (in science textbooks, movies, TV news, or documentaries) is rare. By extension, how maths or geometry are packaged for public consumption in, say, advertising is equally rare. This disciplinary confinement of media studies in the English and language arts curricula means that the end product of media analysis commonly remains focused on getting students to produce "proper" written texts.

In contrast to media studies, computer studies have been implemented hastily over the last decade with relatively little teacher or parent resistance. If anything, we have witnessed a tidal wave of financial and in-principle support from federal and state governments for successive initiatives: in the 1980s, to put a computer in every classroom; in the early 1990s, to put a computer on every child's desk; and by the mid-1990s, to have every classroom wired.

> Date: Sat, 17 Apr 1999
> From: s338370@student.uq.edu.au
> To: ED205 Mailing List ed205-6@mailbox.uq.edu.au
> Subject: Questions for week 4 (fwd)
>
> I think the biggest change will be that teachers will have to continually upgrade their IT skills, and [they] will have to be willing to change the content and format of their lessons to incorporate new technologies. At present, a lot of teachers are still technology illiterate, and don't allow students to explore technology. I had a son in Grade 7 last year who was not allowed to use a computer to do any assignments for the whole year: His teacher didn't "believe" in computers. This year, his English teacher relies on him to teach the rest of the class how to do Internet searches. My daughter, in Grade 10, prepared a PowerPoint presentation as part of an oral assignment, only to find that the school only had one overhead projector, and students were not allowed to use it! I think that is a very sad statement on the state of IT in schools.

Underscoring this IT push, huge pressure has also come from parents' vocal demands for schools to make students computer literate in light of the heavily promoted millennial visions of the new "techno-literate" citizen of the 21st century. Schools and communities have jumped on the IT bandwagon in the rush to "teach computers." In efforts to make students functional front-end users, most computer education instruction focuses on core skills such as keyboarding basics, file management, text and spreadsheet processing, CD-ROM and World Wide Web navigation, some hardware maintenance, and troubleshooting skills. The problem is that most computer instruction is about the teaching of operational skills. A critical cultural dimension is rare in school-based IT and computer studies.

What would a critical approach to computer literacy include? Such an orientation might consider, for instance, issues of equity and access; the emergence of new virtual identities and communities; issues of an authentic or "masquerade" identity; the relationship between local and global issues of authorship, censorship, ownership, or cultural appropriateness; shifts in learning and teaching; changing teacher and student roles; and challenges to the industrial model of schooling. In the study of Web-based information sources, students are generally not directed to ask the critical questions: Whose interests are being served, through what means, and toward what ends? Can we trust this information and why?

Applying the tools of media analysis to Internet information, we ask students to consider the following:

- What persuasive appeals, promises, or other signifiers of trustworthiness are used to secure our trust and attention and engagement with a particular site?
- How does this site (or CD) reveal a gender, class, cultural, or ageist bias?
- What semiotic features are employed to construct a particular information environment?
- Are there particular software or Web site genres?

- How are traditional narrative forms re-presented onscreen, or how are they reworked and hybridized with the new net-lingo?
- How has e-mail changed the protocol and structure of our communication?
- Has cybertextuality already changed our language use?

There are many social, political, and cultural issues at stake in the information revolution. Not least are the changes in language, communication structures and processes, and social relations generated by a shift from print to cybertextuality. These are crucial lessons for students about a critical and self-reflexive analysis of the role of IT in society, and about how it shapes cultural and language change. Yet computer education remains firmly rooted in an operational skills orientation at the expense of a more critical orientation. By that I refer to a metaknowledge of the very operational IT skills that already structure big parts of everyday experience—from activating automatic cash machines to using e-mail, from Internet shopping to video game playing.

Date: Thu, 22 Apr 1999
From: s344621@student.uq.edu.au
To: s373755@student.uq.edu.au
Subject: Week 7 reading review

Week 7's reading encompasses the way computer games work as a form of media. The readings raise such issues as the portrayal of gender roles and cultural stereotypes. The readings also drew links with games' influence on other forms of media such as film. The construction (or lack of!) of plot lines, stereotypes, and violence [is] forming discourse that overlap[s] genre and format barriers. This homogenization not only occurs within different medium[s], but also across national cultural identities. The readings also raise concerns of too much American and Japanese cultural content among available video-game software. The readings subtly call for an influx of local cultural content into currently available video games. A few things to ponder: Does cultural homogeneity lead to globalisation or cultural monopolization? I think cultural homogeneity has its positives and negatives. Sure, it will lead to a more globalised community, but it will also smother and eliminate individual cultural identity. ENJOY!

Course parameters

In the current climate of university degree rationalisation, teacher education programs in Australia suffer from all the symptoms of an increasingly crowded curriculum. In that context, we have combined a media-cultural studies unit with an information technology unit offered in a 13-week semester-long course. Students in this course are enrolled in a double undergraduate degree program: Most are BA or BSc majors taking concurrent educational courses over 3 years; the fourth year is a professional year consisting of a major practicum component. In short, students come from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds with a diverse range of skills. Science or computer science students, for example, have limited essay writing and social or cultural analytic skills, whereas BA majors in history, English, or languages tend to have some social science theoretical and analytic background, but many have limited IT skills.

Date: Fri, 23 Apr 1999
To: ed205-6@mailbox.uq.edu.au
From: s367612@student.uq.edu.au

Personally, I do not see the Internet as a wonderful teaching resource. In my opinion it is easier and much more valuable for students and teachers to use written resources written and put together in line with most curriculums. The Internet sites that deal with teaching are not as easy to find or as easy to use as textbooks and handouts. Those times when computers are used, they will not prove to be superior to traditional classroom teaching with students interacting with texts. How much of your research do you do on the Internet, compared to books? In terms of the loss of skills due to computerization, I do not see this as a bad thing. In any case, students still need to know how to spell to use a spell check and need to know grammar to understand a grammar check. These skills will not be lost, they will simply be performed with more help from computers. But, overall, I do not see computers as changing too severely the traditional structure of teaching in schools [or] disrupting the face-to-face social interactions of students.

There are also generational differences in teacher education. Older students tend to voice more "techno-phobic" concerns about their com-

puter knowledge and abilities than younger students who are recent high school graduates. To complicate matters, students may choose the sequence of four compulsory education courses within the first 3 years, which means that some students have significantly more background knowledge of educational theory and issues. In that context, there is no middle to teach to; no common stock of knowledge can be assumed; and all tasks, requirements, expectations, and so on need to be clearly spelled out. I suspect that this is the case in many teacher education courses in North America and elsewhere: The technological common denominator is, at best, elusive.

In the subject described here, the course outline is provided on paper in the first week of classes, after which it can be accessed on the course Web page. This Web site is password accessible only to students enrolled in the course, although the course outline and staff and resource list are in the public domain. One 2-hour lecture is scheduled weekly, and tutorial groups of 20 meet weekly for 1 tutorial hour in the department's IT centres. There is computer access for each student, although students prefer to work in pairs if not groups. Each tutorial group is assigned to a listserv where students discuss weekly lecture content or readings and issues related to assignments, e-mail, and technical problems. We also provide an additional 6 hours of monitored Open Access where tutors babysit the lab and equipment, but do not formally instruct. Students have additional first-come-first-served access to networked computers across campus (e.g., libraries, IT centres).

> Date: Mon, 10 Aug 1998
> From: s342520@student.uq.edu.au
> To: ed205-8@mailbox.uq.edu.au
> Subject: ed205-8 discussion for lecture 3
>
> I think that the Internet will cause future generations to be more solitary and withdrawn as talking over the Internet is not the same as face-to-face interactions. The ability...to walk up and just start talking to somebody on the street will become more difficult. Media [do] not influence people our age or older nearly as much as...children. Personally I don't think that the media [have] a great deal of influence over the way we dress. The media [do] however unconsciously control the way most of us behave. For example the Coke ad where the muscle-bound guy comes down the lift causes male society to want to get fit and shape up, and Dolly magazines cause females to want to be thin.

> Date: Tue, 11 Aug 1998
> To: ed205-8@mailbox.uq.edu.au
> From: s093389@student.uq.edu.au
> Subject: ED205-8
>
> The technological age has brought with it barriers to achieving a more equitable society, as economic differences have meant unequal access to the new technologies. Socially, people can assume a different identity. The personal interaction common to us now will be lost due to the new technology. The human ability to adapt to different social situations and relevant behaviours will no longer be applicable in a "virtual society."

> Date: Tue, 11 Aug 1998
> From: s335669@student.uq.edu.au
> To: s342520@student.uq.edu.au
> Subject: ed205-8 discussion for lecture 3
>
> I disagree with Dean [pseudonym] that we will become more withdrawn with the use of the Internet, but he is right in that it is definitely not the same as face-to-face interaction. However I think this is a good thing in many ways. We can broaden our horizons, talk to people half way round the world, and create a new type of "cyber community." Sure you won't talk to as many people on the street, but it won't be hard, just less frequent. The thing is there will always be time for face-to-face conversation, just in the same way we still use books. If we don't close off these options, then we are just exposing ourselves to a wider variety of interaction, where each type has its own place. "There's a time and place for everything."

In each tutorial group of 20, students are asked to self-select into teams of four. On a rotational basis, teams summarize weekly lectures and readings and formulate key questions on the e-tutorial discussion lists; they also build a group Web site throughout the semester. Students are expected to thematize their Web site according to a self-selected curriculum area, choosing images, wallpaper, screensavers, or icons that reflect a particular content area; for example, cell or water themes for biology students or *Shakespeare in Love* movie clips and related Elizabethan iconography from English

majors. Each group Web page has links to individual Web pages of each group member where students upload individual assignments and maintain a Reflection Log. Here students reflect on the collective process of group work: task delegation, choices, and negotiations; decisions about Web page thematics, group name, and wallpaper and image selections; technical and interpersonal problems encountered and solutions formulated. This exercise requires that students think about collaborative problem solving in the construction of a hypertext assignment (Web page), reflect on their own problem-solving skills, and on the strengths and weaknesses of learning and information design in a virtual community context.

> To: s343351@student.uq.edu.au, s366891@student.uq.edu.au
> From: s367612@student.uq.edu.au
> Subject: This week's tutorial questions
>
> I completely agree with the opinion held by Terri [pseudonym]. I do feel that teachers must be able to use and not be afraid to take advantage of new technologies as a means of educating within classrooms of the future. However, my biggest concern is the current state of affairs. As prospective teachers, we will be better equipped to integrate computer literacy into our classroom. However, perhaps another question I could pose to you all is How do we enable teachers who graduated 10–15 years [ago] to cope with the rapid changes which are taking place within the classroom? Such teachers will be leading into the year 2000 with little appreciation of a very important component of teaching. What kinds of short-term changes will ensure that such teachers will still be effective within the classroom?

We have attempted in the past to provide readings online, but students resisted this idea. They claimed that they do not like to do coursework readings on the screen, and that it is too expensive to download chapters and articles. We therefore have one prescribed book (Grabe & Grabe, 1998) and one course reader with a collection of articles and book chapters. When it comes to serious readings, students still prefer print on paper and the transportability of books and readers. Although we attempt to provide as much information and as many resources as possible on the course Web site—tutors are able to respond to student queries over e-mail 24 hours a day, 7 days a week—there are aspects of this course that still require face-to-face delivery, such as demonstrating Web navigation, search engine use, HTML conversions and uploading, and media text analysis.

Media and cultural analysis

The course is organised around the concept of multiliteracies (New London Group, 1996), which is also taken up in this issue by Cynthia Lewis and Bettina Fabos (see pp. 462–469). The concept begins with the assumption that people confront and negotiate the everyday world using a diversity of literacies with which to decode the multiple and densely layered environment of symbolic and iconic, cultural and social semiotic meaning systems. Historically, media of communication—whether speech, photography, TV, Internet, or the printing press—organise and rework information, knowledge, and meaning systems in different ways. Hence, early in the semester a brief synopsis of the social history of communication media is presented where we look at the influence of, for instance, hieroglyphics, the alphabet, the printing press, the telephone, and the Internet on social organisation, learning, teaching, knowledge, and power. The larger sociocultural questions we raise are as follows:

- In oral cultures, who has access to knowledge and therefore social power?
- How do mnemonic devices function to preserve a tribe's or society's knowledge?
- Is the transmission of information in oral versus print culture more authentic and unmediated?
- How did the printing press change the organisation of and control over knowledge?
- How did teaching and learning change as a consequence of the need for print literacy?
- Is disembodied communication via the Internet different from the faceless communication of 19th-century telephony?

> Date: Thu, 6 Aug 1998
> From: s333033@student.uq.edu.au
> To: ed205.2@mailbox.uq.edu.au
> Subject: Lecture 3—media studies summary & questions

With the expansion of media influences in society, it is necessary that the teachers of the future are aware of the technological advances in education. In the first hour of the lecture, Carmen Luke emphasised the forms and impact of mass media with regard to the formation and development of education. With the computer revolution at our doorstep, we are now faced with a more globalised information network. As a result of this the teachers of tomorrow need to be aware of how media literacy shapes people's local and worldwide views. However the educators must also encourage students to critically analyse everyday media representations. Throughout history the human race has endeavoured to communicate among ourselves. The ancient civilisations used primitive forms of written communication on stone, papyrus, and parchment. But the majority of their communication was by oral means (e.g., storytelling, memorisation). With the development of the alphabet, a new standardised form of discourse emerged. In 1447, the development of the printing press led to the rise of the book culture, which allowed an explosion of literacy and knowledge. Due to this, mass public schooling became of greater importance. Recent technological advances include the telephone, movies, radio, and television. Now we are faced with a new revolution, that being the information age, for example the availability of the Internet. QUESTIONS: Has anyone ever heard of CE before, as an alternative to AD? Does anyone actually have a problem with BC and AD?

Once we arrive at 20th-century mass media we look closely at the advent of consumer culture, the production of consumption through the marketing of identity from childhood to adulthood. A good example is the network of desire created by sequenced product releases through, first, the movie (prequels and sequels), then spin-off cartoons or similar TV programs; thousands of merchandise items and action figures; sequenced fast-food, cereal, or soft drink contests; clothing; bedding; pencil cases; and, not least, an interactive CD and Web site. Students are asked to study and discuss how toys such as Barbie, Transformers, or Gameboy enable and constrain play, make-believe, behavioural, social, and linguistic repertoires. They are asked to consider how important teen magazines and TV programs were during their own adolescence, and how designer products remain socially important identity markers for them as university students today—from the must-have backpack label or cellphone to the "in" boots, sunglasses, designer T-shirts, or cargo pants.

Childhood and adolescence are experienced within these intertextual media and commodity discourses, which not only constitute a significant source of social learning (e.g., about social, gender, and cultural relations; about family, community, conflict, and power), but shape family life in significant but largely imperceptible ways. Sunday family outings are experienced in shopping malls, children's play and language repertoires are shaped by developmentally appropriate toys or CDs, parental product purchases are highly influenced by children's media-reinforced desires and demands, bedtimes and mealtimes are structured around the TV schedule, and so forth. Once the connections among mass media, consumer culture, and identity formation are established, we then focus on the analytic tools that teachers can use to help students deconstruct the textual and image constructions of contemporary social realities. The long-term aims of any deconstructive strategies are "reconstructive" and move students toward the production of (multi) media texts. In this course, the production component is the making of a group and individual Web page. The analytic tools we teach are semiotic, narrative, and genre analysis.

Date: Tue, 01 Sep 1998
To: ed205-7@mailbox.uq.edu.au
From: s368240@student.uq.edu.au
Subject: ed205-7 lecture 6

I thought the idea that we are all surrounded by semiotic symbols was interesting, and the idea they are expressed as opposites, e.g., good bad, was new to me. It had never occurred to me that an object is what it is only because it is not something else, or that a symbol means something because it doesn't mean something else. Like, a red light means STOP only because it doesn't mean GO. Another thing that struck me was that symbols usually stand for something other than what they actually are. E.g., Big Ben stands for London, but in reality it's a clock. Do you believe that symbols should stand for something other than what they are? Do you think it is a good thing to have symbols mean something because they don't mean something else, or should symbols have their own meaning that cannot be confused with anything else?

Date: Tue, 01 Sep 1998
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From: s332324@student.uq.edu.au
Subject: ed205-7 lecture 6 response

Semiotic analysis helps students understand how media messages construct meaning, construct social reality, construct cultural values and ideals, and construct identities. Therefore, being able to teach students the tools of semiotic analysis is important; students must be able to deconstruct the signs and symbols which surround them. Do you agree with the benefit of semiotic teaching to students, giving them the tools to be able to "read between the lines," so to speak? Do you think that the technical jargon surrounding semiotic analysis (i.e., signifier and signified) could maybe create confusion for young students who may be able to see the meaning beyond the symbol but may not have the words to describe it? Should there, therefore, be levels in semiotic analysis taught to students?

One of the first assignments, then, is a semiotic and narrative analysis of an IT product or service. Analysis of information technology products and services focuses students on investigating how media representations construct images of IT: How is age, social class, gender, or cultural diversity associated with IT? What visions are produced of the techno-literate subject in a new wired and global culture? What lifestyle benefits are promised? How is information on technical features or hidden costs backgrounded or foregrounded? How do text-image binary oppositions, such as old/new, low tech/high tech, traditional/futuristic, nature/science, shape our understanding of consumer products and culture, but specifically our sense of the brave new world of the information revolution?

Armed with the deconstructive tools of semiotic and narrative analysis, students' next assignment is a critical evaluation of two school Web sites. Students question issues such as site safety; judgments on trustworthy information; appropriateness of imagery in relation to text; representational features that make a visitor welcome, interested, and likely to return for a later visit; whether the site appears student centered (and authored) or promotes an administrative marketing approach; and efficacy of knowledge design and functional design. Analysis of knowledge design requires that students assess the logical connectedness of information across Web pages and hotlinks, and functional design refers to the logic and ease of site navigation.

These first two assignments are due by mid-semester. Students submit a paper version of the media analysis unit, which they are expected to upload to their Web site by the end of the semester. The school Web page review is uploaded and marked online. These two assignments provide opportunities to learn how to upload HTML files, and how to scan and upload images (ads for the media unit). It also gives students experiences with having their work marked electronically, which is one component of cybereducation that they are expected to comment on in their Reflection Logs.

IT and social change

After completion of the media-cultural studies part of the course at mid-semester, we then focus on issues of technology and social, cultural, and educational change. The conceptual framework for this part of the course is also based on the concept of multiliteracies. We emphasize the need (a) to move beyond simple operational skills of 1980s-style computer education and (b) for students to understand and reflect upon the social and cultural dynamics and consequences of teaching and learning in virtual environments. For example, we look at how quickly and subtly computing discourse has generated language change and infiltrated everyday language use: Acronyms (FTP, www, http, HTML, CD) have taken on the function of verbs and nouns; new words emerge (*emoticon, hypertext, e-mail, autobot*); and old words are imbued with new meanings (*boot, browse, button, flame*). Linguistic hybrids reflect a merging of the language of IT and the book: *Click* or *scroll* has replaced *turn the page, bookmark* means to put an electronic marker where there is no book; Web sites consist of documents in hypertext, which consist of paperless pages.

Reading is undergoing subtle shifts from the exclusively bookish horizontal direction of left to right text chunking to vertical scanning as we scroll and fix on key words. The iconography of software—from scissors (cut) and garbage cans (trash) to the pop-up jester (incoming e-mail) or

the file folder (open close file)—reflect distinctively western cultural meanings and literate practices. Electronic reading and writing practices are framed within these meaning systems that suggest not only new symbolic languages but also new forms of cultural imperialism (Luke, 1996).

We consider the social and educational effects of "bodyless" communication. If the social cues of cultural difference, gender, impairment, accent, or body shape were removed from social encounters, we might be liberated from the trap of perceived cultural capital by which we judge, categorise, and often stereotype others. Hence, socially constructed markers of disadvantage may well be eliminated in cybereducation, yet the invisibility of difference can fail to alert us to the special needs and educational requirements of some students. In short, the well-documented relationship between students' habitus and cultural capital (Bourdieu & Thompson, 1991) and teacher judgments of students' background and scholastic performance and potential may well become irrelevant in purely electronic pedagogical relations. However, it opens up problems of targeting educational provision and support for students who require specialised assistance.

Date: Tue, 11 Aug 1998
To: ed205-8@mailbox.uq.edu.au
From: s368006@student.uq.edu.au
Subject: ed205-8 discussion for lecture 3

We deal with technology every day and so need skills to use this technology to live in today's society, such as operational skills. This is so important, because if [you have] no operational skills [you] will feel very out of place. We need to have understanding of the effects technology has on a local level and a larger, global level (socially and culturally), and the response to those changes of society is part of critical technology education. Media studies [involve] the study of mass media and mass culture. The study of media is important because media [affect] everyone through advertising influences, the shaping of cultural and social values, as a source of social learning and language learning, and public information and education. We therefore need critical analytical skills (meaning that we are not to take the things we read and see literally, but instead critique them, debate with them and analyse them) to understand how media [shape] people's values and desires. Throughout history communication media have evolved, and we are in an important step in this evolution at the present time. The changes in media communication have brought about a change in social and cultural emphasis and values. There have always been critics of change in the past even though in hindsight we can see they were important steps for the progress of society. The changes in communication media have also brought about changes in the power structure of society (i.e., media magnates), diversification of knowledge and social organizations (e.g., making communication simple and accessible). QUESTION: How do you think the Internet will affect people's social skills in the new millennium? People will definitely be spending a lot of their time on the net and see that as a normal way of communication (which can become an excuse to not having enough time to personally see a person). Some might become even uncomfortable in the future talking face to face with people anymore. I think, in respect to this aspect, it might not be as beneficial. But as everything else, every individual will really decide what effect the Internet will have on their social skills.

Date: Wed, 12 Aug 1998
From: s339483@student.uq.edu.au
To: ed205-8@mailbox.uq.edu.au
Subject: ed205-8 discussion from lecture 3

I think that the Internet will have an effect on our social skills in the future. It will probably mean less contact face to face and more contact through e-mails, chat rooms, discussion groups, etc. I have found that I often e-mail people more than telephone them simply because it is more convenient. You don't have to worry if they are not home, they will still get your message. The Internet is also great for meeting people from different places around the world that without the Internet you would never meet. The Internet may change the way we socialise, but I'm not sure if it is a good or bad thing. I feel it is good as long as we still have face-to-face contact as this is an important social skill.

The need and potential for intercultural communication—that is, a heightened meta-awareness (perhaps even self-censorship) of "others" in our communications network whom we cannot see—is the kind of cultural literacy that is crucial for teachers and students. Collaborative writing and project activities with students from around the

world require teachers to ensure that their students understand concepts of the social and cultural others.

For example, in one of our e-tutorials, a few students were discussing the use of humor in advertising. The topic was a washing machine advertisement that showed a high-tech, white, and sun-drenched washing machine on the banks of India's Ganges river. A group of women in brilliantly colored saris were beating the machine with clothes, simulating doing the wash in creek beds, on rocks, or the banks of the Ganges. The students discussed the semiotic features of the ad: oppositions between high/low tech, use of color and humor, gender stereotyping, constructs of development, and so on. What they hadn't realized was that several Asian female students were also in the group. These women did not consider the ad funny and took offence at the representation of Indo-Asian women as ignorant, silly, and stupid to the point where they would beat a washer with clothes, apparently misunderstanding the use of that technology. The Asian female students explained to the rest of the group the very point we had made earlier about reading positions: Their reading was totally antithetical to that of the Anglo-Australian students. Many students subsequently apologised to the rest of the group, and some claimed that they had learned the point about reading positions. Subsequent encounters in that group were more polite, often more cautious, and, on my reading, seemed intentionally inclusive to the point of consistently raising related issues about indigenous and minority groups (e.g., in terms of access to IT, media representations, English as universal software language).

> Date: Wed, 02 Sep 1998
> To: ed205-7@mailbox.uq.edu.au
> From:s801056@student.uq.edu.au
> Subject: Response to discussion
>
> I feel that many semiotics are biased. But since they surround us in our everyday lives I rarely think twice about them. It is important to break down the symbols and signs and become aware of what they are really saying. It is important to teach kids this as well. Unfortunately semiotics are such a huge part of our lives that it will be almost impossible to get rid of them. Plus the symbols and signs make life easier and quicker.

> Date: Wed, 02 Sep 1998
> To: ed205-7@mailbox.uq.edu.au
> From: s368232@student.uq.edu.au
> Subject: Semiotics
>
> I think it will be interesting to see the effect that globalisation...has on semiotics. It could be that as more and more people speak a common language, say English, the need for symbols that can be understood by anyone will grow less. However, I believe that symbols become more prevalent as more of the world is opened up to symbols. For instance, once upon a time it would have been pointless McDonald's posting the Golden Arches in say, Tibet, because no one would have known what they meant. Now, there is a point because more and more people understand what the symbol means. As the world becomes a global village, and especially as American culture spreads, the number of people who understand symbols at a glance will grow, making communication and understanding between peoples of different cultures even easier. What I'm interested in is whether or not this is a good thing. Will better understanding mean greater international brotherhood, or lead to the death of individualism in the pursuit of worldwide homogeneity? Any opinions?

> Date: Fri, 04 Sep 1998
> To: ed205-7@mailbox.uq.edu.au
> From: s338162@student.uq.edu.au
> Subject: Lecture 6: Summary
>
> While "some symbols are universal" and "some symbols are culturally specific" are views that I accept, today symbols are continuously being created and used in marketing for a product [and are] also part of the overall packaging. As with the label of Coca-Cola, the McDonald's *M* to even the Michelin man. Movies and groups in popular music also use symbols which are used as recognition regardless of culture. In our culture today, with leaps and bounds in technology, are we and our children becoming more visual in being able to decode and read symbols? If so, should teachers and the schools be adapting to make lessons more visual rather than text based? If we are more visual that means that we are learning more visually than through, say, text? Should text be adapting more to the visual environment to make learning more natural for children?

An important aspect of IT and social change is that traditional book-based curriculum resources are no longer the sole source of teaching and learning. Instead, the Internet now provides a vast array of resources that teachers and students can access. In order for students to develop experience with searching for curriculum materials and global student projects, or in chatting with other teachers or sharing resources, the major assignment is a Curriculum Resource Unit. We present the overall aim of this assignment in this way:

> Your task is to select two Web sites that you could teach with in class and that you would direct your students to as a resource base. For example, you might be teaching a unit on wetland habitats. You would teach part of the unit using the Web, and subsequently your students would be required to use Web-based resources for their own project on local pond or wetland habitats. Alternatively, you might be doing a unit on volcanoes or the cardiovascular system. Your task, then, would be to find good quality and comprehensive sites that both you and your students could use.

Because efficient search skills are critical in locating information, students need to be familiar with the niche specialties of various search engines. Students are required to write a brief overview of two search engines they consider most useful for their particular curriculum resource search. Their write-up has to address this question: How would you as a teacher write an accessible review of two search engines for your students?

Students must also document their search journey, writing it up as a kind of travelogue, noting blind alleys, false starts, backtracking, judgments of (in)appropriate sites (e.g., dated information, too commercial, too advanced), trustworthiness of information, student- or teacher-friendly, and so forth. By paying attention to their information choices, students must self-consciously reflect on the judgments they make in the design of their assignment. This forces them to think critically about the efficacy of the search engine they have selected, the search strategies they have used, and the criteria they use to accept or reject a Web site on knowledge, pedagogical, and functional (technical) grounds.

To summarise, the focus in this second half of the course is to provide students with a critical overview of the sociocultural embeddedness of IT discourses and practices. Students subsequently apply such a critical orientation in their Reflection Log where they consider (a) the pros and cons of e-tutorials, of Web-posted assignments, lecture notes, electronic lecture delivery, and electronic marking; (b) whether e-tutorials generate a sense of isolation or community; (c) the usefulness of using the Web rather than books for data and resource collection; and (d) the learning experience of collaborative knowledge construction (i.e., Web page).

Toward the end of the course, two guest lecturers provide teacher insights on issues of IT implementation, classroom practice, and curriculum integration at an elementary and a senior high school. A final trouble-shooting lecture session invites students to bring technical problems to our attention, which we solve online in lecture.

Remaking teacher education: A first step

Throughout this course, we attempt to model the very approach and relationship between teaching/learning/IT that we teach about. We use as many media sources as the limitations of the university's IT infrastructure allow. Moreover, we incorporate the notion of multimedia, multimodalities, and multiliteracies in the assessment lineup. Students write a traditional analytic essay, yet provide hotlinks in their papers to appropriate Web sites, and they are expected to include relevant URLs in their reference list. Students must reflect on the pathways they use to search for data (curriculum resources) and explain why they selected some curriculum resources over others (e.g., validity of information; more up-to-date, colorful or friendly site, or relevant content in relation to age and grade level). They must provide a short review of two search engines and then explain why, for their purposes, they would choose one over the other. In short, students have to think about and make explicit the search and information choices they make.

After 13 weeks of cruising around cyberspace—battling the inevitable terminal, software, and hardware problems that creep up weekly in university computer labs and being forced to work together, both in and out of scheduled tutorial times on the group and individual Web pages—students confront a range of problems for which they need to formulate solutions. In that sense, the assessments are not ends in themselves or specific skills every

teacher needs to have. Rather, they enable pathways of learning and individual and collaborative problem solving that are not predetermined but are encountered in authentic contexts as students find their way through software protocols and limitations, electronic databases, and the virtual landscape that is cyberspace.

By the end of the course, students' course evaluations and their assignments indicate to us that they have a good grasp of the concept and practices of multiliteracies. Moreoever, they demonstrate critical understandings of the need for a critical cultural literacy of IT, in addition to core how-to front-end user skills, and seem convinced of the inevitability of the theoretical and practical shift from pedagogy conceived of as knowledge transmission to knowledge as design. Admittedly, student feedback on evaluations or the texts they produce for assessment are no guarantee that student perspectives have been transformed. What they tell us may be no more than giving teachers what they want. However, we receive many anecdotal reports and comments from students to support our general sense that this generation of students, raised in a post-MTV era of Nintendo, Gameboy, and computer technology, is highly receptive to multimedia and multiliteracy approaches to teaching and learning. Although students claim that their own schooling has been primarily textbook-based chalk-and-talk pedagogy, they are keen to transfer their out-of-school media- and IT-based learning experiences to the classroom. In part, the success of this course is as much about providing opportunities for student innovation and creativity as it is about guiding students through a repertoire of operational and critical skills.

It is important to note that at the University of Queensland these approaches have parallels in many of the other subjects in the teacher education program. There are core subjects on language, critical literacy, and discourse analysis (see Allan Luke's article, pp. 448–461), but students also study youth and adolescent cultures and issues—and a new subject (drawn from Vygotskian psychology) entitled Mind, Culture, and Difference. As a result, many of the analytic and research techniques, technological competences, and critical reading positions acquired in the subject discussed here are taken up at other points in the students' training and in their school practica.

Capitalizing on students' generational background knowledge and skills, we try to lead them to see that a tools approach to IT and multimedia is not about using media or the Internet to produce the same old measurable results, based on the same old collection code curriculum so typical of industrial model schooling. Rather, it is about using IT as a tool with which to transform (a) the very relationships between student and teacher, among students, and between students and knowledge and (b) the very organisation of school knowledge itself. That is to say, industrial model organisation of schooling and knowledge depends on timetable and disciplinary distinctions and separations of subject specialities and teacher specialists. An IT-based multiliteracies pedagogy, by contrast, depends on viewing knowledge (and teaching) as integrated, thematic, multimodal, and interdisciplinary. The course I have described here is but one approach—indeed, one demanding constant attention, reflection, and revision—that attempts to teach critical analytic skills across a range of media and information sources and to provide a new generation of teachers with the conceptual and practical learning experiences of a multiliteracies pedagogy.

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Donna E. Alvermann
Margaret C. Hagood

Fandom and critical media literacy

Fandom of alternative popular culture texts can be a route to connecting students' out-of-school lives to school literacy practices.

As educators committed to advancing literacy practices, we have a great appreciation for the topic of reading. Our enjoyment of and commitment to reading are realized in the considerable time (and money) spent developing and cultivating our understanding and knowledge of the subject. On any given day, a dose of our reading habit may include a poetry reading to a class of students, a journal article and part of the newspaper during lunch, and a chapter of the latest best seller before retiring for the evening. This dedication to our reading practices may be proof that we appreciate literacy, but if we delve a little further into our own reading lives we realize that we not only appreciate reading but that we are fans of reading as well.

As reading lovers, we choose to belong to groups that hold reading in high regard. We may, for example, attend monthly book club meetings where we engage in book talks with others who share our reading interests. During the discussions, we acknowledge one another's reading preferences of particular authors and genres and argue against or agree with the thoughts of other members. Or, we may tune into the book club episodes of *Oprah* to learn about the text interpretation of strangers. In keeping with the desire of most fans to be with others like ourselves, we join national groups such as the International Reading Association (IRA) that encourage our reading endeavors. As members, we attend and present at conferences so that we can discuss trends in reading education with others

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who share our love of reading and also learn of the latest book titles on the shelves.

Personal artifacts attest to our behavior as well. In wallets we find well-worn library cards that are used on a weekly basis. If we are really hooked as readers, we may tout an Educators' Discount card from a chain bookstore that we use to purchase stacks of books amassed from our perusal of the aisles as we sip a cup of coffee. As reading fans who are technologically linked, we have Amazon.com bookmarked in our favorites folder on our computer for easy access to our individual, online book account for ordering 24 hours a day.

As fans of reading, we collect books too. We build classroom libraries and marvel at one another's complete sets of a particular author's works. To recruit others into our group of fans, we encourage our students to order books through monthly book clubs; and we use book points to purchase more books for our collection because, as we all know, no one can ever own enough books. We also attend book signings so that we can buy autographed copied of books, and, if truly fortunate, we have the author autograph a poster or book illustration. These treasures we frame and hang in our classrooms or offices for others to see.

We read, we converse with others, we collect—all because we have an affinity for reading. To characterize the nature of our practices in developing and honing this love, we would argue proudly that we are indeed fans of reading. But are we as accepting of other forms of fandom?

Fandom: What is it?

The popular consensus that fandom is a stigma—a label to be attached to adoring audiences that are passive and manipulated by the mass media—is a concept presently under attack (Lewis, 1992; Storey, 1996). No longer willing to submit to the popular notion that fandom is a pathology marked by a deviant and exaggerated commitment to some aspect of the music industry, cinema, television, or sports, defenders of fandom have begun to speak out. For example, the cultural studies theorist, Joli Jenson (1992), argued that fans are not suffering from a sense of psychological inadequacy when they seek to establish some form of contact between themselves and the world of celebrities. Nor are teenagers who attend rock concerts necessarily in search of an illusory sense of community. Rather, Jenson contended that the loyalties literacy educators feel to reading (or other teachers to their subjects, opera buffs to the opera, or gardeners to their horticultural societies) are no different from the loyalties adolescents feel toward objects of their affection. The difference between adolescents' fandom and our own, if there is any, lies in what counts as suitable tastes or preferences worth cultivating. In Jenson's words:

> Fandom, it seems, is not readily conceptualized as a general or shared trait, as a form of loyalty or attachment.... Fandom, instead, is what they do; we, on the other hand, have tastes and preferences, and select worthy people, beliefs and activities for our admiration and esteem. Furthermore, what they do is deviant, and therefore dangerous, while what we do is normal, and therefore safe. (p. 19)

Drawing lines of demarcation between topics that adolescents find appealing to read, write, and talk about in our classes and those that adults find worthy of taking up school time is a counterproductive pedagogical practice. For as Jenson (1992) went on to argue, when we stigmatize the fandom of particular segments of our society (e.g., adolescents' loyalties to their favorite bands, musical recording artists, or celebrities of other kinds), we are cutting ourselves off from understanding how meaning is enacted and shared among members of those particular groups.

A better strategy for viewing fandom, and one that serves as the purpose of this article, is to remain open to the possibility of welcoming certain aspects of adolescent fan culture into the school curriculum. Exploring fandom with students may bring about insights into how students construct meaning from their personal interests and provide teachers with a window through which to view students' constructed identities. Along with this welcoming of fandom in the classroom would also come, we hope, an interest in critical media literacy instruction. An important premise in teaching critical media literacy is that teachers focus on respecting the pleasures adolescents experience as fans while simultaneously engaging them in a deeper understanding (through various reading, writing, speaking, and listening activities) of what it means to be a fan of a certain person, group, or object (Luke, 1997).

Why music and fandom?

In this article, we focus on a particular kind of fandom—that of adolescents and their musical preferences. Music infiltrates their lives in many contexts: at home, in shopping malls, and on the go. Cars come equipped with radios as well as compact disk and cassette players so that listeners may play music of their own choosing. However, in most of these contexts, middle and high school students are not the primary selectors of the music played. Perhaps this helps explain why 90% of American seventh- through twelfth-grade students have radios in their bedrooms and, of that group, 60% have their own stereos (Davies, 1996). Music video channels and musical scores from Hollywood films offer still other dimensions of the popular music scene beyond the radio that adolescents partake of on a daily basis—a scene that may have originated in the United States, but one that Kellner (1995) believed was invading cultures all over the world, producing new forms of the *global popular* (p. 5, emphasis in the original).

How can we as literacy educators assist adolescents in developing their literacy practices and affective sensibilities toward the music they appreciate and follow as well as develop within ourselves a better understanding of the students that we teach? One way, we believe, is through acknowledging young people's interest in music and inviting them to bring this interest into the classroom. By connecting adolescent musical fandom in all its many forms to critical media literacy, we believe teachers can become instrumental in assisting students' engagement in the complex multiliteracies that they are encountering as we enter the 21st century. Put another way, we believe that connecting adolescents' musical fandom to critical media literacy is a timely project—one that moves us forward in our thinking toward what *JAAL* Editors Allan Luke and John Elkins (1998) referred to as the need for "reinventing literacy in 'New Times'" (p. 4).

One view of fandom and reading

According to cultural theorist John Storey's (1996) assessment of what fan culture involves, "Fandom is not just about consumption, it is also about the production of texts—songs, poems, novels, fanzines, videos, etc.—made in response to the professional media texts of fandom" (p. 127). Storey drew on the thinking of de Certeau (1984) and Jenkins (1992) in making his argument for viewing fandom and reading as anything but textual determinism, where the text is seen as positioning the reader in a particular ideological discourse. Instead, Storey argued that "fans do not just read texts, they continually reread them" (p. 128), and it is in this rereading that a reader's experience of a text is altered. According to Storey, "rereading thus shifts the reader's attention from 'what will happen' to 'how things happen,' to questions of character relations, narrative themes, the production of social knowledges and discourses" (p. 128).

As former public school teachers, we see implications in Storey's (1996) views on reading and fandom for teaching critical media literacy at the middle and high school levels. Before drawing such implications, however, we offer vignettes of two adolescents whose teachers involved them in literacy assignments that integrated music fan culture into the existing curriculum. One of the adolescents, Sarah Gosling, attended school in Ontario, Canada; the other, Max Stahl, is a high school student in Athens, Georgia, USA.

Sarah's story

We became acquainted with Sarah Gosling through an e-mail posting that one of our colleagues, Gwynne Ash, came across while browsing the Web in search of some news on her own musical interests. Here is Sarah's response to Margaret's request to use portions of Sarah's interpretation of "What a Good Boy" (Page & Robertson, 1996) by the Canadian musical group Barenaked Ladies in a conference presentation at the 1999 IRA meeting in San Diego.

> Ms. Hagood, I'm very flattered that you would want to use my interpretation at the conference and you have my full permission to do so. I live in Ontario, Canada and am in gr. 13 (we have 5 year high school). I was in grade 11 when I was given the assignment and I received a 95% on it. The assignment was to find five poems or songs on a common theme by the same person. We simply had to interpret each song individually and explain how it related to the topic (mine was "uncertainty"). The other songs I chose were "These Apples,"

"Great Provider," "When I Fall," and "Straw Hat and Old Dirty Hank." If you would like me to email you anything I wrote about them I could do so, however my best one by far was the interpretation of "What a Good Boy" which has been my favorite song since I was 12 years old. Also, in the past couple of years I have noticed that the song could also refer to homosexuality. The way it talks about gender roles and forbidden love ("I know that it isn't right") DEFINITELY suggests that that could be a possible interpretation. I'm very happy to be of help to you and I'd be interested in hearing how the conference went. Thank you very much. Sarah Gosling

Although every effort was made to contact Sarah and request her approval for further use of her writing, we were not successful. Full credit for this material does belong to Sarah. The interpretation of "What a Good Boy" that Sarah alluded to in her message to Margaret is quite lengthy. In order to conserve space, we share here only portions of writing that she posted to the Song Interpretation section of a Barenaked Ladies Web site, http://www.cgocable.net/~mejaskim/bnl/opinion/Gordon/WhatAGoodBoy.html.

June 4th, 1998. This is going to be really long, but it was part of a school project I did where we had to interpret lyrics of five songs by the same artist. Oh, and there may be a bit of fluff that I put in for a better mark but just ignore that! (I got a 95%, so I think it's OK!) "What a Good Boy" is one of my favorite songs by Barenaked Ladies. The song is basically about the fact that society imposes gender roles, and an unspoken rule of how people are supposed to act. These are imposed from birth and no one can get away from how they are expected to act. The uncertainty in this song (my theme was uncertainty, just so you know!) is not clearly defined, but I see it as being the inner turmoil felt by the narrator, questioning his beliefs and principles, and not being able to do anything about how he feels. It is not clear exactly what the inner turmoil is about, however, I read a comment by Steven Page himself in which he said that he wrote the song to be fairly open to anybody's interpretation of what the conflict could be about. The first verse, though it sounds cute and complimentary upon first hearing it, is actually quite discriminating. It says, basically that society expects everyone to be good and smart. On top of that, boys should always be strong, and girls should always [be] pretty. Note that the verse begins with "When I was born, they looked at me and said" meaning that these stereotypes are established at birth, before anyone has a chance to develop their own personality, therefore being restricted to behave within certain parameters. The next verse begins with "We've got these chains that hang around our neck, people want to strangle us with them before we take our first breath" again, signifying that the "chains" of people's expectation are present all of the time. The strangling occurs when anyone strays from the boundaries of normalcy and become outcasts from society. People know that being different is "wrong" because the beliefs of what is normal and what is not are instilled in people from birth onwards.... The second verse is then repeated again, but the line "When temptation calls" is left unfinished, which leads me to believe that the narrator may just be considering giving into the temptation to break away from society's stereotypes and expectations and have a little fun. Of course we don't know for sure, but the openendedness was a nice touch. The song finishes with the first verse again, and we are left thinking of how true these stereotypes are, and how society imposes expectations on us all "before we take our first breath." But the sad thing is, nobody really wants to change it.

Max's story

After reading Sarah's interpretation of a song that she had expressed being a fan of since she was 12 years old, we were curious as to what other adolescents closer to home were listening to, and whether or not teachers in our hometown of Athens, Georgia, were finding ways to welcome students' musical interests into their classrooms. To find answers to our questions, we invited Max Stahl, the 15-year-old son of one of our colleagues, Steven Stahl, to join us for an evening of pizza and discussion about his musical tastes. What follows are a series of excerpts from an extended interview that lasted over 2½ hours and involved Max playing some music, which he had written, on his acoustic guitar. He also invited us to listen to a piece that he had composed electronically using a synthesizer in a software program on his computer. After the interview session, Max continued to communicate with us by e-mail. Where relevant, portions of these e-mail communications are also included.

Max's definition of a fan. When asked what it would take for him to say that he was a fan of some recording artist or band, Max elaborated in great deal why he doesn't see that label fitting his interest in music. His reasons seemed to center mostly on tastes in music, as indicated here:

Margaret: So you're saying people who are fans, even if they are boring, what are they fans of?

Max: Mostly they're fans of, of uh, music and bands that I absolutely can't stand....

Margaret: Like whom?

Max: I have a lot of problems with prefabricated rock bands and pop bands like um, I have a problem with the Spice Girls, and I have a problem with 'N Sync, and I have problems with the Backstreet Boys, and um, 98 Degrees....

Margaret: Do you have friends who listen to these bands?

Max: I do. I have acquaintances who listen to those bands. I have some friends who listen to them, and I tolerate that just because they're my friends, and they have other aspects about them that I enjoy their company anyway....

Margaret: And how do you—I guess I wonder how they behave that makes you identify them as fans?

Max: I think part of fandom, if you will, would be just, um, paraphernalia that goes along with the band. I mean, I have...a few bumper stickers that identify me as a person who enjoys listening to certain types of musical events but I don't plaster my room with them.... And, um, my bookbag over there [gesturing toward his bag] is clean of any sorts of buttons or anything. These people [those he identifies as fans] are exactly the other side of that. They're not—it's not—subtle at all. It's blatantly obvious....

Margaret: And so do you lump all of those together?

Max: Usually, yes.

Margaret: All right. So those are there, what's over here? [gesturing with her hands].

Max: Over here is the stuff that actually took time, and it took thought, and it took actual musical ability to create. Like stuff where there are people who actually play instruments or do something that you could call them musicians....

Margaret: [drawing on previous knowlege of Max's tastes in music that we learned through e-mail with him prior to the interview] Well, now, if I were to say, Max, you're a fan of Led Zeppelin, how would you react?

Max: I would almost say that you're right, but I wouldn't say that I'm a fan to the extent that I wouldn't enjoy or I wouldn't listen to anything else....

Margaret: So would you, um, go about learning more about Led Zeppelin's music and how to play Led Zeppelin tunes?

Max: Well, I've done—I've done enough of that—trying to play them. Or at least I've attempted to. It's difficult. You listen to it on the album and it sounds so easy, and then you actually try it yourself and it takes you weeks just to get moderately good at playing one song. And also it's difficult because they use a lot of weird nonstandard guitar tunings.

We came to understand from these conversations that Max's enjoyment of music stemmed from his affinity for playing musical instruments, namely the guitar, as contrasted to other types of fans who appreciate music solely as listeners and not as fellow musicians. Although reticent to call himself a fan of any one particular band, artist, or genre of music, Max explained that he admired artists such as Jimi Hendrix and Led Zeppelin because they were good musicians, and tried to emulate their work by both playing their songs and adapting their songs to compose his own musical scores. Max's construction of himself as a fan, then, was more one of his appreciation of the musical abilities of the forerunners of classic rock guitar playing as it fit within his conception of being a good musician, but not necessarily tied to being a fan of a particular artist or band. As a musician himself, Max, therefore, is a fan of music, using his own experiences of the difficulty of playing and composing good music to guide his judgment of his musical tastes. His interest in various groups and their musical compositions assist in his developing guitar playing abilities.

Max's description of an assignment that tapped his interest in music. In our interview with Max, we learned that Mr. F., his literature teacher, had shared some of his own musical interests with Max. This intrigued Max, who then proceeded to tell us of an

instance in which Mr. F. gave the class an assignment that required students to bring their musical tastes into the classroom:

Max: There was a project in literature class where we selected works of art, or works of music, and various things from different kinds of media that we thought represented ourselves.

Donna: Who did you...

Max: I don't know why I actually selected Pink Floyd because I don't really think it represents me or anything. I just really, really like it. It was a fantastic work called "Be Careful with that Axe, Eugene," and it was just, it was weird—that's the word for it. About 2 minutes into the song, you hear this guy—I assume it was Syd Barrett—whispering into the microphone, 'Be careful with that axe, Eugene,' and then there's just a woman screaming that lasts almost the rest of the song.... And what I really was amazed by that song was just the way that, the way that everything built up before that...a few bars beforehand, I mean, everything was kind of relaxed...then it just starts building up really fast...and it stays there. Somehow throughout the whole 12 minutes of the song, you sit there and you're listening to it, and you're completely transfixed. And that's partly because it's almost entirely a guitar solo....

Donna: Um, as a student in Mr. F.'s class, do you know what his purpose was in giving that assignment?

Max: Uh, I think he actually explained it to me once. I think I completely forgot what he said. But I think his actual aim in doing the assignment was, was perhaps so that the people would actually look inside themselves and see what their interests were, really, and try to define themselves. It was called a self-definition project....

Max's account of shared interests between his teachers and himself. Max continued to relate how he had discovered that Mr. F. and he shared similar interests in music. He told us that his teacher writes for the *Flagpole*, a local paper that features the music scene in Athens. He also described his physics teacher as someone who was willing to talk about music at school.

Margaret: Max, is that, is that something that happens a lot at school—sharing of interests? I mean...between teachers and students?

Max: Not really...because there aren't a lot of teachers that are really willing to share their musical tastes.... A lot of teachers are so bent upon, um, upon the academics that all they're really willing to do is just teach students.... They're not really willing to become friends with students or really share anything with them. My physics teacher listens to a lot of music. Some of it I haven't heard of, and he's gotten me sort of interested in it. And he listens to a tremendous amount of the Allman Brothers, and he, himself, used to play in a band. He used to play country. He never really liked country, but he appreciated the money that it brought him, and he's actually a lot better than I am, and he considers himself a mediocre guitarist.

Max reflects further on his musical tastes. For 5 days after the interview with Max, we continued to receive e-mail messages from him that were reflections on his musical tastes. Here, we share several of these messages, our responses to him, and exchanges between the two of us as we tried to make sense of what we were learning.

Date: Fri., 2 Apr 1999 18:58:53 EST
From: Max Stahl
Subject: Re: Max et al.

I don't think that the music I'm listening to right now entered the discussion [last evening]. DJ Shadow is, perhaps, one of the few early techno/early rap artists that I deeply admire. His slow, walking drum rhythms are truly interesting, and that's the only instrument he plays, all the other instruments are sampled from old records. Normally I'm not in favour of sampling (Puff Daddy is a grand example of a bad samplist), but DJ Shadow's persistent rhythm and harmony of composition swayed me in the end. See also De La Soul, PM Dawn, and Public Enemy.

Date: Sat., 3 Apr 1999 11:08:24 EST
From: Margaret Hagood
Subject: Max et al.

Donna, I find it interesting that Max, as an appreciator/fan of music, distinguishes between his idea of good music and poor music. Much of what he thinks is poorly produced music is considered

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popular by others. For instance, he does not like 'N Sync, 98 Degrees, Backstreet Boys, Spice Girls, or Puff Daddy, for that matter. His interests are more obscure. He was impressed by his lit teacher's knowledge of and appreciation for the Dead Kennedys (an off-the-beaten track punk group) and he likes the work of Beck and R.E.M.'s old stuff but does not like the more mainstream R.E.M. stuff (didn't he mention something about his distaste for R.E.M. when it moved from the alternative section in the record store to the popular section?) It is sort of the same argument that Madonna uses against Courtney Love. This is the distinction between musical production for the masses (considered by appreciators as music for fans) and "real" artists' work (appreciated by those who have a cultivated understanding of the music industry).

Date: Tue., 6 Apr 1999 17:25:16 EDT
From: Donna Alvermann
Subject: Re: BNL

Max, if you have time, we'd like to get your "take" on BNL (Barenaked Ladies) as a musical group. Are you familiar with them? Where do they fit into your schema for things musical?

Date: Tue., 6 Apr 1999 21:37:22 EDT
From: Max Stahl
Subject: Re: BNL

My sister listens to a lot of BNL, so I have heard enough of their stuff to form an opinion. Well, now that I think of it, maybe not. Perhaps the reason why I'm so specific in my musical tastes is because I like the feeling that music gives you. I like music that makes you fly, makes you swim in lagoons of isles you've never visited before, takes you places. I try to make my music do that, but it rarely works. I mean, you take the odd rhythms of "Sunrise" and the improvised themes of "Sunset" [two pieces that Max had composed and played for us on his acoustic guitar] and you get a basic image that goes with them. I think perhaps the best way for me to present my music would not be with lyrics, but with accompanying poetry, because that's the only way I can describe them—especially my techno pieces, which are all inspired by dreams. I listen to Pink Floyd because it speaks to me somehow; the slow, rhythmic procession of instrumentation fills my brain with so many interesting thoughts, it's difficult to process them all. And then I listen to something like "Embryonic Journey" (Jorma Kaukonen, Jefferson Airplane) and it's the same thing. The feeling evoked by "Embryonic Journey" is, as it should be, a journey (though I would scarcely call it embryonic). Stephen Pinker (no matter how much I do hate the man as a supposed expert on neuroscience) said that it is impossible to describe a subjective experience (like music) because it has to be re-encoded multiple times before becoming language. This, as I find out whenever I try to describe music, is very very true. The closest thing I can say is that Pink Floyd's music is more incantive than Jefferson Airplane's (or at least it was during Syd Barrett's day), or that Man or Astroman? is more frantic than the Beach Boys. I'm not entirely sure what I was trying to say there, but I'm sure it'll help you a bit.

Although Max may not have identified himself as a fan, his interest in music and his discerning taste could be characterized as fandom. As one who appreciated music that was more alternative or classic than popular, he sought the company of others who shared his specific musical interests, like his literature and physics teachers, and who had introduced him to several bands unknown to Max. By conversing with others with similar musical preferences, Max has been able to cultivate and broaden his musical knowledge of less well-known musicians, which to him seemed very important.

Max's musical pleasures stem from his interest in listening to instrumental texts he considers well written, unlike Sarah whose love of music seems more connected to actively reading and interpreting lyrical texts. Max is not as interested in lyrics; instead, he is more interested in the feelings that accompany listening to the instrumentation of his musical preferences. Instrumental music connects with Max's sense of self and is a venue for experiencing pleasure. Through instrumental texts, Max experiences deep emotional responses as noted in his e-mail describing his love of music as having the capacity to make him fly or take him away. Even in his self-definition project, Max chose a 12-minute song by Pink Floyd because he was moved by its lengthy guitar solo. That solo was more important to him than either the title or the lyrics.

Complicating the notion of a unified audience

Just as Bourdieu (1979/1984) has written about how people's tastes function as markers of their social class status, so too do words such as *appre-*

ciation and *fandom* serve to demarcate high-brow from low-brow tastes in music. This kind of dichotomous thinking is problematic because it privileges the pleasures of one group while it discounts the pleasures of another. As Frith (1996b) explains though, all fans discriminate based on what they judge as valuable. In his words, "people bring similar questions to high and low art, [such] that their pleasures and satisfactions are rooted in similar analytic issues, similar ways of relating what they see or hear to how they think and feel" (p. 19). Although differences exist perhaps between the forms and productions of high- and low-culture texts, all people keen on particular kinds of music, whether they deem themselves fans, aficionados, or appreciators critique and comment on the work of their favorite artists and groups. Just as fans of Mozart's concertos may critique a particular symphony's performance of Mozart's work, fans of popular music also judge the merit of the work of those whom they admire.

All too often though, the separation of high-culture musical interests (Mozart, Wagner) from low-culture musical interests (Led Zeppelin, Barenaked Ladies) gives the impression that adolescents—viewed collectively as belonging a particular age group that consumes low-culture texts—share the same musical interests as fans. However, as seen between the musical interests of Max and Sarah (two adolescents close in age) fans of music, especially contemporary music, may have very differing tastes, desires, interests, and reasons for choosing their music. Further, not only do adolescents have differing musical preferences within the category of contemporary music, but they also view themselves differently in terms of the kinds of fans that they choose to be in relation to those texts.

For Max, considering himself as a fan of anything was difficult to do. Although he came close to acknowledging that he was a fan, he felt that the term was too constricting and was not inclusive of his varied interest in music. He discussed different types of fans but had difficulty placing himself within that construction. He saw himself as an appreciator of music but not as a fan of it. To him, being a fan connoted "strange images of groupies" as a "particular species" of fans who were committed to following the work of one artist or band. He did not identify with this type of fandom because he felt it limited his options for appreciating several artists' work. Describing a different type of fandom, he said, "you have people who aren't groupies that admire people like Jimi Hendrix...because they're good musicians and they occasionally try to emulate them." Max seemed to include himself in this latter group.

On the other hand, Sarah may be less discriminating than Max in her construction of self as a fan of a particular band. She very much considers herself a fan of Barenaked Ladies and openly expresses her interest and pleasures in the song "What a Good Boy." Over the years, Sarah has enjoyed making meaning from the same artists' work. Revisiting this song over time, she has read and reread the text and in the process constructed new meanings from it.

Max and Sarah come at their musical interests from very different perspectives yet they both share aspects of fandom that capitalize on their pleasures experienced from reading those texts. Each could argue that the other's personal musical interests constitute a kind of fandom. Bringing these different kinds of fandom together for discussion may provide a richer perspective for understanding both the various kinds of pleasures derived from fandom and the kinds of judgments made of others outside our own fan base about the objects of their affection.

However, bringing aspects of fandom into the classroom and only discussing with students their own personal pleasures derived from these texts leaves all of us where we are and does not acknowledge the various aspects of fandom and texts that may be read from different positions. It is this practice—reading from different positions—that is a component of critical media literacy and that allows for deeper understanding and meaning making. Implementing critical media literacy instruction in conjunction with musical fandom may get at these conceptions of judgments made about fandom and high and low culture issues; it may also get at the political undertone emanating from the heart of the matter.

Implications for teaching

Approaches to teaching critical media literacy using students' interests in music typically fall along a

continuum that requires teachers to negotiate issues surrounding the politics of pleasure and audience (Alvermann, Moon, & Hagood, 1999). Briefly stated, these issues have to do with learning about, acknowledging, and helping students explore pleasures in music in ways that will open possibilities for positioning themselves (and ourselves) differently as a consequence of being exposed to other materials. For example, introducing new readings of the lyrics or instrumentation of a song without dismissing the pleasures students have already formed is one approach to teaching students to develop a critical perspective toward objects of their fandom. Important to bear in mind with this approach, however, is the fact that students may develop critical positions that differ from the ones we, as teachers, might like them to form.

As Sarah explained in her interpretation of the song "What a Good Boy," readings of this musical text may incite multiple interpretations from students about gender and sexuality. Discussions about various meanings of the text as related to these concepts may lead students to be critical of particular kinds of orientation that marginalize others in the process. Teachers must realize that critical media literacy practices recognize both students' pleasures and their critiques of the texts, but these practices also remain bound to a pedagogy of responsibility whereby teachers must negotiate these malleable yet influential spaces so that no voice is privileged over any other.

Encouraging adolescents to engage in parody and imitation is another approach to helping them use what they currently know as fans of a particular music genre, artist, or group to grow in their understanding of what attracts them to the object(s) of their fandom (Buckingham, 1998; Lewis, 1998). As some of the recent literature on teaching critical media literacy using popular culture forms (Alvermann, Moon, & Hagood, 1998; Buckingham, 1998) has pointed out, adolescents' imitation of their favorite recording artists and bands does not necessarily mean that they are mindlessly reproducing the ideology that we as teachers are trying to get them to understand better from other positions. It is through this kind of safe imitation, or what looks to be imitation, that adolescents may actually be trying on new positions and identities that they had only imagined previously. As Hall and Whannel (1990) explained, identifying with and trying on these various identities may allow youths to construct mental images of possibilities of being within the world.

When Max played for us on his guitar, he chose segments of several songs by Jimi Hendrix, Pink Floyd, Led Zeppelin, and R.E.M. He explained while playing these segments that he had spent a considerable amount of time listening to, learning, and practicing works by these very accomplished guitar artists. Jimi Hendrix, Max noted for our benefit, used much improvisation when he played solos because he did not have any formal schooling in music theory. And, at a later point in Max's performance, when playing R.E.M.'s song "Man on the Moon," he would stop at certain points in the song telling us why he liked that particular segment of musical text.

Following his performance of others' work, Max played for us some of his own music. In keeping with his interest in the instrumentation, he had not composed any accompanying lyrics. While playing his original scores "Sunrise" and "Sunset," he explained that he adapted a section from "Man on the Moon" to compose the "Sunrise" movement of his work and that he intentionally did not finish the second movement, "Sunset," so that he could play it differently each time. Playing his composition in this manner allowed Max to parody Jimi Hendrix's improvisation method throughout the second movement of his song. Thus, as a form of parody, Max used the work of artists whom he admired to compose his own musical texts. Parody, then, "can function as a critical mode in its own right, which provides access to the parts that more closed forms of analysis cannot reach" (Buckingham, 1998, p. 70). As teachers interested in critical media literacy, we need to view imitation and parody as avenues for involving students as fans while simultaneously helping them to tease out the pleasures of their fandom in ways that cause them to learn from such experiences.

Still another approach to teaching critical media literacy using adolescents' interests in music involves developing their understanding that while a particular taste in music is inevitably "an effect of social conditioning and commercial manipulation" (Frith, 1996a, p. 120), it is still explainable to the self as something special. Max's insistence that he is an appreciator (but not a fan) of classic rock music is a good example of how one's individual,

or special, taste in music is an experience of identity. Having said this, room still exists for exploration of how different tastes in music work materially "to give people different identities, to place them in different social groups" (Frith, 1996a, p. 124). A rationale for such exploration can be found in Bourdieu's (1979/1984) contention that people, consciously or not, use judgments about cultural tastes to legitimate social class distinctions. Bourdieu's argument is key to teaching students about critical media literacy.

For example, one way that Sarah's and Max's teachers might have used Bourdieu's (1979/1984) argument to draw attention to how distinctions in cultural tastes serve to maintain social inequalities would have been to follow up on their original assignments that had to do with self-identity. Sarah's teacher might, for instance, have engaged her in a more in-depth look at the patterns of production and consumption underlying the popularity of Barenaked Ladies, while Max's teacher might have questioned him about the distinctions he drew between music appreciation and fandom. Because we were not present in either class, we cannot say for sure that follow-up activities similar to the ones we suggest were not done. However, judging from what Max told us, his teacher focused the one assignment solely on self-identity as it related to a themed literature unit on the same topic. And Sarah's e-mail message seems to indicate that the class assignment ended when students had successfully interpreted five songs that related to their self-chosen themes (Sarah's being "uncertainty").

Bringing together fandom, music, and critical media literacy in classrooms may open up new opportunities for the classroom context to be a site of active meaning making by both teachers and students using a variety of popular culture texts. Using fandom of popular cultural texts such as music to explore these multiple meanings may be a way to get students interested in school literacy practices while providing teachers with insight into students' out-of-school lives. According to Jenkins (1992), fan reading and rereading of texts allows for a social context to be formed where multiple interpretations and understandings of a text are discussed, which enhances meaning and furthers understanding. He explained that discussions of texts

> expand the experiences of the text beyond its initial consumption. The produced meanings are thus more fully integrated into the readers' lives and are of a fundamentally different character from meanings generated through a casual and fleeting encounter with an otherwise unremarkable (and unremarked upon) text. (p. 45)

Fandom as a construct of pleasure may be a way of tapping students' interests in exploring the critical literacy practices needed for the 21st century, for as Frith (1996a) explained, "musical pleasure is never just a matter of feeling; it is also a matter of judgement" (p. 115). Pleasures are both a pathway for teachers to learn about and understand students' fandom as well as an avenue for inquiry into multiple readings of texts from various positions.

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Allan Luke

Critical literacy in Australia: A matter of context and standpoint

Can critical literacy move into mainstream state-mandated curriculum?

What happens when a "radical" educational idea moves from the political outlands to become a key concept in state curriculum? Postcolonial, feminist, and sociological theory of the last 2 decades proposes a critical educational project as a key step in challenging and transforming dominant discourses and ideologies in postindustrial economies. Yet at the same time there has been heated dialogue at International Reading Association conferences and other events about U.S. state and school board controversies when literacy educators take public stances around issues of recognition of difference and social justice (Young, 1995). What happens when a radical approach to literacy education moves into the tent of a secular state education system? Does it lose its critical edge? Is it a matter of appropriation, repressive tolerance, and "selling out"? These are the central questions—perhaps obsessions—in this article.

This article is an introduction to theories and practices of critical literacy (Lankshear, 1997; Muspratt, Luke, & Freebody, 1997; Walton, 1996). It also poses an unresolved question about educational reform in New Times: about the sustainability of a socially critical, discourse- and text-based approach to literacy in a conservative educational climate, one characterised not only by moral uncertainty, cultural redefinition, and new and renewed forms of economic exclusion and disadvantage, but also by tight-fisted, managerialist responses to diminishing government resources (Apple, 1999; A. Luke, in press). The unwritten subtitle of this article, then, should probably

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be something like this: Is critical literacy in a state-based educational system an oxymoron? Or: Is that really "critical literacy" or just a watered down version of educational progressivism? Or, for those educational reformers who suddenly find themselves handed the keys to the car: We have met the enemy and it is us.

First, some cautionary advice about the lineage of this article. It is distinctively Australian, a broad outline of the moves to develop critical literacy as an educational project over the past 15 years. Many of us learned a costly lesson from the centre margin relationships of international educational research: It is dangerous to generalise any educational approach from one national regional and cultural context to another. So I'm not proposing the extension of what we've done in Australia to other national, regional, or local school systems. That is for you to decide, if indeed there are points of convergence and possibility with the cultural practices and textual work of your institutions, and with your normative beliefs about what should count as literacy.

A key lesson from the history and sociology of literacy is that literacy education is always a situated response to particular political economies of education (Baker & Luke, 1991). By political economies, I refer to the institutional and governmental arrangements, and the distribution of discourse, material and spatial resources within societies that govern educational reform. In terms of literacy education, we can view our work in state schools as a principal way in which the state (and, increasingly, multinational corporations, and Nongovernmental Organizations or NGOs) enables and disenables—whether through intention or accident—the spread of particular textual practices: from the reading of novels to the writing of scientific prose, from the critique of the press to the writing of nationalistic essays, from the study of religious myths to the construction of Web pages.

One of the major characteristics of globalisation has been the appropriation of what were previously governmental functions by transnational NGOs. It is worth noting that organizations like the World Bank and Asia Development Bank are among the largest sponsors and developers of literacy and educational development programs internationally, guiding program goals and targets, curriculum design, selection of providers, and program evaluation.

The economies and cultures of New Times rely upon discourses and texts—retro and nouveau, official and face to face—as principal modes of work, consumption, leisure, and everyday exchange. Discourses and texts are forms of capital for exchange in these economies. Who gets access to them, who can manipulate and construct them, who can critique, refute, second guess them are the key educational issues of the next century.

From a sociological perspective, the work of literacy teachers is not about enhancing individual growth, personal voice, or skill development. It is principally about building access to literate practices and discourse resources, about setting the enabling pedagogic conditions for students to use their existing and new discourse resources for exchange in the social fields where texts and discourses matter. These constitute the social semiotic "toolkit" that one puts to work in educational, occupational, and civic life (see James Gee's article on pp. 412–420). Rather than debate over method, we could profitably engage in debates over the actual components of the toolkit, and the enabling conditions for engagement with and transformation of that toolkit. How we select and frame these resources in our teaching has consequences for our students' capacity to become active designers and agents in shaping their social futures and those of their communities and cultures (New London Group, 1997). How we build these components with and for students is, further, as much a question of system-wide curriculum policy, school reform, pedagogic leadership, enabling and disenabling institutional systems, and school and classroom cultures as it is about "method" per se (Gamoran, Secada, & Marrett, in press; Newmann, 1996). Literacy education, then, is about institutional access and inclusion, and potentially about discrimination and exclusion. It is about setting the conditions for students to engage in textual relationships of power.

You'll notice that I've used that sneaky pronoun *we*: we in Australian education. Critical discourse analysis teaches us to be highly suspect about such pronouns of solidarity. Is this the "royal we" that Queen Elizabeth uses in her New Year's address? Is it the "we" that politicians use? Is there some kind of imaginary construction of all

Australian educators standing behind this article? Who does "we" silence, who does it give voice to? Many Queensland teachers teach aspects of functional grammar (Halliday, 1994), drawing attention to ideological uses of pronominalisation as part of a critical literacy agenda.

I'm writing from the curious position of a critical educational researcher and minority background educator who is now employed as an educational bureaucrat. For the past 6 months, I have been working as Deputy Director General of Education for the state of Queensland. While completing a large-scale study of school reform in Queensland (Ladwig et al., 1996), we are developing a prototype for futures-oriented curriculum reform within Queensland. I won't bore you with the ethnographic details of the changes in perspective that occur when one moves from the classroom to the academy to the bureaucracy. Whether and how critical educators should be "getting their hands dirty" by engaging with governments is a story for another time. (One of Leonard Cohen's more brilliant songs was an anthem for the civil service—"First We Take Manhattan," which begins with a message to all baby boomers who have made the journey to the centre of government: "They've sentenced me to 20 years of boredom, for trying to change the system from within.")

These matters of context and standpoint are important for *JAAL* readers who might be reading this issue and wondering, as Cynthia Lewis and Bettina Fabos ask, whether this would work in the heartland. Many of the modest proposals by Elizabeth Moje, John Readence, Josephine Peyton Young, and David Moore; James Paul Gee; Donna Alverman and Margaret Hagood; and Carmen Luke would not be considered "off the wall" in Australian schools. They have already been implemented in state school systems. The mastery of multiple discourses of critique described by Gee is at the heart of many primary and secondary classrooms in Queensland and other Australian states. The focus on analysis of the texts of popular culture described by Alvermann and Hagood have been in place here for the past decade as part of English and language arts curricula. Finally, the melding of multimedia analysis with semiotic analysis of new media texts described by Carmen Luke features in many Australian teacher-education programs and is being encouraged in Queensland trial schools in 2000. These innovations don't always roll out smoothly, their piloting is contested ("These aren't the basics I knew in school"), full of practical classroom glitches ("How do we set state standards to assess that Web page?"), and replete with full-blown ideological backlashes ("Does semiotics mean that we're abandoning Shakespeare?"). But the practices and the debates over what might count as critical literacies and multiliteracies have been well underway here for over a decade.

What follows is a broad description of one particular version of critical literacy—there are many—that has had broad influence on how many Australian teachers in the states of Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia teach reading and writing, or, better yet, how teachers teach texts and discourses (for key source books, see Anstey & Bull, 1996; Comber & Simpson, in press; Freebody, Muspratt, & Dwyer, in press; Hasan & Williams, 1997; Knobel & Healy, 1998; Lankshear, 1997; Muspratt, Freebody, & Luke, 1997). My story here outlines the theoretical moves, practical strategies, and political compromises involved. It is also meant as a bibliographical resource for North American readers unfamiliar with this work.

From theory to classroom practice

It is curious that the 1997 education reforms in Singapore called for a new focus on critical thinking. We could debate at length what might count as critical thinking in southeast Asian political and cultural contexts (C. Luke, in press; Luke & Luke, in press). The principal concern of Singaporean policy was the need for a more innovative and creative class of highly skilled symbolic analysts to support the country's burgeoning high-tech, information, and finance sectors. Not surprisingly, the educational emphasis has been more akin to the forms of "lateral thinking" described by critical thinking entrepreneurs and cognitive scientists, and not about the critique of political economy and society in the sense that Freire (1995) proposed in his first work on literacy campaigns in postcolonial countries.

For many North American reading educators, the term *critical literacy* refers to aspects of higher order comprehension. These range from descriptions

of metacognitive reading strategies to reader-response orientations toward, for example, inferring endings, authorial intent, bias, or stereotypes. While they don't disbar it, such approaches tend to sidestep a systematic analysis of the relations and fields of social, cultural, and economic power where people actually use texts. Perhaps these are deemed "too hot to handle" in relation to local school boards and state educational politics. But, equally, they are the logical outcome of definitions of literacy as individual skills within human subjects, rather than as situated social practices in communities.

If there is an axiom that grounds approaches to critical literacy it is Freire's initial claim that all reading is transitive—that by definition one reads and writes something. Nothing controversial in this, it is a claim that is wholly compatible with many cognitive and psycholinguistic perspectives. But Freire upped the ante by arguing that in reading any particular text one must by definition engage with "reading the world" (Freire & Macedo, 1987). To expand the point sociologically: Students' use of texts and discourses has identifiable and dynamic "exchange value" in the interactional fields of social institutions (e.g., workplaces, educational institutions, community sites, government, and civic spheres) (Carrington, in press; Luke, 1997). Such fields are "linguistic markets" (Bourdieu, 1993), local economies of signs and symbols where different kinds of student practice translate into value and power in ways that are at once predictable and quite dynamic.

In Australia, then, critical literacy agendas have traveled a different pathway than North America, or for that matter Singapore. They begin from the assumption that reading and writing are about social power and that a critical literacy education would have to go beyond individual skill acquisition to engage students in the analysis and reconstruction of social fields. Teaching and learning literacy—shaping and constructing the uses of texts and discourses—require a critical knowledge of and engagement with these fields.

Of course, these agendas have a history of controversy. In the 1980s, dominant Australian approaches included traditional cultural heritage models. At the time, secondary English and primary school language arts were moving toward what Freebody and LoBianco (1997) referred to as "personal growth" models. This movement was marked by the national implementation of the Early Literacy In Service Program (ELIC) in the mid-1980s, introducing teachers to process writing, running records, and immersion approaches to whole language. It was also based on the belief among many critical educators that reader response and personal voice approaches to literature study in the secondary school had emancipatory power for individuals and socioeconomically marginalised groups. This potential of literature and writing workshop approaches to enfranchise adult learners in at-risk communities is a powerful theme taken up in the U.S. work of Rose (1990) and in the Canadian feminist pedagogy of Horsman (1990). What Willinsky (1990) termed the "new literacy"—holistic approaches to reading and writing, pedagogical progressivism and process orientations in classrooms—was well established in many Australian state school classrooms and teacher education programs by the early 1990s.

Such descriptions of paradigm shift are, at best, sketchy. As any teacher knows, approaches old and new coexist within staffrooms and across schools despite the best attempts by materials developers, researchers, and governments to swing the system in particular directions. Instead, the power and idiosyncrasy of the "local" is at work in all curriculum reform: In classrooms particular approaches tend to coexist, blending and creating hybrid approaches to teaching that no textbook developer, researcher, or bureaucrat could have conceptualised. By definition, curriculum and pedagogic discourses have a way of taking on lives of their own once in circulation in schools. So while many of the dominant discourses, professional debates, and research about literacy education moved toward whole language and personal growth in the mid-to-late 1980s in Australia, traditional approaches to literature study and basic skills approaches to reading remained—with (radioactive) half-lives and continuing influence.

At the same time, the national focus on whole language, process writing, and personal growth was subjected to rigorous theoretical critique in the early 1990s, traces of which rarely surfaced in mainstream North American literacy journals or conferences. Note that the sources cited below are Australian in origin, many published by Commonwealth and European publishers. This is a subtle, hidden factor in literacy debates and na-

tional debates over educational policy. Even in globalised conditions, the political economy of publishing has powerful effects on the circulation of educational ideas, again favouring a centre-out, West to East, North to South movement. Consider these critical positions:

- The critique—from sociologists—that such models emphasised a new possessive individualism at the expense of an analysis of socioeconomic power (e.g., Baker & Luke, 1991; Freebody & Welch, 1992).
- The critique—from poststructuralists and feminists—that emphasis on the personal and "voice" was undertaken at the expense of an understanding about how discourses construct multiple and gendered forms of social identity (e.g., Gilbert, 1989; Green, 1993; Lee, 1996);
- The critique—from systemic functional linguists—that a focus on immersion, personal growth, and literary narrative failed to provide the most disadvantaged students with explicit knowledges of how particular genres of intellectual and political power work, and how to strategically construct them (e.g., Christie, 1990; Cope & Kalantzis, 1995; Halliday & Martin, 1996).
- The critique—from cultural and media studies—that there was a systematic neglect of visual texts; texts of new information technologies and media; and, most recently, texts of new workplaces (e.g., Kress & Van Leeuwen, 1995; New London Group, 1997).

Such "critiques" didn't stay critiques for long. They were transformed into practical agendas and materials for teachers across Australia. The accelerated attempts by teachers to transform contemporary academic theory (e.g., poststructuralist feminism, systemic functional linguistics, critical multiculturalism) into classroom practice were and remain quite remarkable among Australian teachers. This is quite an extraordinary turn of events from the usual theory practice, academic school disjunctions and time lags that typify teacher education and schooling (cf. Britzman & Dippo, in press). New blendings of practice emerged. This involved a move from both individual skills and personal growth to a focus on how texts work (Derewianka, 1993). In the case of the *English Language Arts Syllabus, P-10* (Queensland Department of Education, 1993), progressive approaches to classroom instruction were blended with an emphasis on texts and contexts.

For the critical literacy agenda, the field of critical discourse analysis (e.g., Fairclough, 1989, 1992; Kress, 1989; Kress & Hodge, 1978; Luke, 1996; Wodak, 1997) draws on a number of key theoretical positions. The journal *Discourse and Society* is also a useful resource on critical discourse analysis.

- Voloshinov and Bakhtin's views that instances of language use are not the sacred production of a single "voice" or perspective but in fact are instances of "heteroglossia," where different ideologies, struggles over difference, and unruly social relations come into play. Practically, this translates into a classroom focus on identifying diverse and multiple voices at work in texts, on giving students explicit access to these cultural and historical positions, and on discussing whose interests such texts might serve.
- Foucault's view that discourse is not the sovereign production of human subjects, but in fact takes on a life of its own, constructing people's identities, realities, and social relations. That is to say, that we are produced by discourse as much as we are producers of discourse. Practically, this translates into a classroom focus on identifying the dominant cultural discourses—themes, ideologies, registers—in texts and discussing how these discourses attempt to position and construct readers, their understandings and representations of the world, their social relations, and their identities.
- Derrida's view that texts cannot be the objects of definitive interpretations, but involve the play of inclusions and exclusions, presences and silences. Practically, this translates into a classroom focus on multiple possible readings of texts, on what ideas, themes, characterisations, and possible readers are silent or marginalised.
- Bourdieu's view that language is one form of cultural capital with variable exchange value in social fields of institutions and communities. Practically, this translates into a class-

room focus on identifying the social relations and sources of power and authority of the institutions (e.g., mass media, workplaces, corporations, governments, educational institutions) where particular texts are used.

- Freire's view that literacy education can generate tools and conditions for people to reposition themselves in relation to economies, cultures, and dominant ideologies. Practically, this translates into a classroom focus on critique, problem solving, and the production of a broad range of texts—traditional and contemporary, canonical and popular, aesthetic and functional—from a range of cultures and institutions.

These theoretical perspectives—an unruly and at times discordant blend—mark out a shift in educational focus from the "self" to how texts work in contexts. The practical aim is to generate vigorous classroom debates over what texts attempt to do, which ideologies are represented, and how students can use them in different social fields. The agenda is not about the imposition of a particular political ideology; rather, it is about beginning from the supposition of the embeddedness of reading and writing, of all texts and discourses, within normative fields of power, value, and exchange. It also moves toward an explicit pedagogy of critical vocabularies for talking about what reading and writing and texts and discourses can do in everyday life. The agenda sets out to teach students to read backwards from texts to the contexts of their social construction (i.e., economies of text production), and to write forwards from texts to their social use, interpretation and analysis (i.e., economies of text use).

The focus of much previous critical literacy work in schools tended to be at the level of the whole text or social context, stressing ideological contents and bias. The Australian work in critical literacy was focused powerfully by the systemic linguistic theory of Halliday (1994), who argued that the lexical and grammatical operations of texts can be systematically traced to ideological representations (field), social relations (tenor), and textual formations (mode).

Practically, this translates into a classroom focus on talking about the technical characteristics, social functions, and contexts of texts. In other words, Australian approaches to critical literacy have developed a sophisticated metalanguage for students to use in developing understandings of and control over lexicon, sentence-level grammar, and text genres—a metalanguage that ties language to function, text to context, theme to ideology, and discourse to society and cultures.

The aim of critical literacy is a classroom environment where students and teachers together work to (a) see how the worlds of texts work to construct their worlds, their cultures, and their identities in powerful, often overtly ideological ways; and (b) use texts as social tools in ways that allow for a reconstruction of these same worlds. Describing human subjects in social fields, Bourdieu (1998) distinguished between the embodied skills, competencies realised in the field (dispositions), how one is situated in relations of power within the field (positionings), and the agency that one is able to assert within the field (position-takings). Hence the redefinition of critical literacy focuses on teaching and learning how texts work, understanding and re-mediating what texts attempt to do in the world and to people, and moving students toward active position-takings with texts to critique and reconstruct the social fields in which they live and work.

The four resources model

The theoretical debates and practical directions noted above have generated a vast array of classroom approaches to critical literacy. There is a growing body of literature on classroom methods and materials used to explore analysis of texts of popular culture and media, literature, social studies and science education (e.g., Anstey & Bull, 1996; Comber, 1993; Comber & Simpson, in press; Fairclough, 1993; Janks, 1993a, 1993b; Knobel & Healy, 1998; Morgan, 1997; Patterson & Mellor, in press). These include practical starting points for initial reading instruction with functional texts, teaching English as a foreign and second language, teaching functional grammar through the analysis of popular musical texts, and critical approaches to indigenous education. Yet the general approach outlined above is not a "method" in the sense understood by basal reader developers and many teacher educators. Fortunately, no formula for

"doing" critical literacy in the classroom has emerged, and many have attempted to actively combat the distillation of critical literacy into a single-step method or a commodity for publishers. If anything, critical literacy education involves a theoretical and practical attitude toward texts and the social world, and a commitment to the use of textual practices for social analysis and transformation.

One of the early problems with the implementation of critical literacy programs concerned the classroom imperatives for initial and basic reading instruction (Wallace, 1992). While the emphasis on functional grammar and discourse analysis to deconstruct texts was well suited for adolescent readers and provided grounds for project and thematic analysis in elementary school language arts programs, it said little about initial reading. Indeed, many Queensland teachers teach aspects of pronominalisation, mode, modality, and transitivity (Fairclough, 1989) to prepare students to (a) identify, analyse, and reconstruct identifiable textual genres; and (b) analyse how these same texts construct potentially ideological versions of the world. An example of this is presented later in this article. But how these versions of "critical literacy" might sit in relation to conventional approaches to reading remained a problem for many teachers.

Freebody and Luke (1990) developed a four-tiered approach to early reading instruction that has now been widely adapted across Australian schools. We proposed that there are four necessary but not sufficient sets of social practices requisite for critical literacy. A recent version of the model offered the following descriptions (Freebody, 1992; Luke & Freebody, 1997):

Coding practices: Developing resources as a code breaker—How do I crack this text? How does it work? What are its patterns and conventions? How do the sounds and the marks relate, singly and in combinations?

Text-meaning practices: Developing resources as a text participant—How do the ideas represented in the text string together? What cultural resources can be brought to bear on the text? What are the cultural meanings and possible readings that can be constructed from this text?

Pragmatic practices: Developing resources as text user—How do the uses of this text shape its composition? What do I do with this text, here and now? What will others do with it? What are my options and alternatives?

Critical practices: Developing resources as text analyst and critic—What kind of person, with what interests and values, could both write and read this naïvely and unproblematically? What is this text trying to do to me? In whose interests? Which positions, voices, and interests are at play? Which are silent and absent?

Our view is that the great debate over which of these aspects of literacy is the true and proper way to teach is fundamentally spurious. Coding, text-meaning, pragmatic, and critical practices are necessary but not sufficient in and of themselves for literate participation in semiotic economies and cultures. The model does not propose a developmental hierarchy whereby one moves from coding to the critical; from the basics to higher order thinking; from initial reading to advanced literature study. In classrooms, lessons can address these different dimensions simultaneously at the earliest stages of literacy education.

At the same time, the model provides a useful template for weighing up and questioning the emphases of current classroom literacy programs. It may well be that you are running a coding-based program with little attention to critical practices; that your literature-rich program stops short of engaging with the pragmatic needs of everyday literacy events; or, for that matter, that your adult education program focuses exclusively on the critical discussions of ideologies and has neglected to provide direct access to how rudimentary textual codes work.

In terms of coding practices, students bring diverse cultural, community, and linguistic resources to bear in the classroom, including background linguistic knowledge of how oral and written language works (Luke, 1994). Some have been schooled before schooling (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990) in ways that give them what appears to be organic or privileged access to the kinds of literacy practiced in schools. Given the diversity of writing systems and their specific print knowledges, and the culture specificity of text genres and conventions, we argue that in a culturally diverse society, many students will require explicit introduction to the code (Freebody et al., 1997). But that introduction needn't be decontextualised, monocultural, and monolingual, run apart from a

critical literacy agenda. Nor will it in and of itself generate the kinds of critical literacy noted above. Code knowledge is necessary but not sufficient for a critical literacy.

In terms of text-meaning practices, we argue that readers' schemata and background knowledge are not in the first instance individual differences, but can be viewed as cultural, community-specific, and gendered ideologies developed through preschool linguistic and literate socialisation. If this is the case, teaching students to comprehend texts and engage with textual genres, macrostructures, and schemata is a practice of making situated meanings (Gee, 1999), whereby particular discourse resources are brought to bear by readers to construct meanings from particular texts. Hence our term *text participant*. This may well be a cognitive and psycholinguistic process, but it is a profoundly cultural and social one, insofar as the macrostructures of literary and expository texts are codings of particular ideologies, and the cultural toolkits of discourses (Gee, 1996; Lemke, 1996) that readers bring to classrooms are the products of their engagement with the cultures around them—residual and emergent, traditional and popular. At the same time, an emphasis on coding and meaning making—at the heart of much current classroom practice—doesn't necessarily deal with students' everyday literacy events and practices.

In terms of pragmatic practice, this model describes the need to introduce students to the contexts of use of everyday literacy materials. As noted above, texts are always situated in fields of power, with economic, cultural, and social exchange involved. Further, if there is a lesson from the various ethnographies of literacy of the last 2 decades (e.g., Barton & Hamilton, 1998), it is that solitary literary reading is but one aspect of literate practice in postindustrial societies and indeed that individual comprehension and writing more often than not entail decision making about what to "do" with the text involved. Teaching pragmatic practices involves enabling students to read contexts of everyday use, assess how the technical features (e.g., genre, grammar, lexicon) of a text might be realized in these contexts, and size up the variables, power relations, and their options in that context. This has been a focus of language experience, English as a Second Language instruction, concentrated language encounters, and other approaches that involve acting out communicative competence. However, pragmatic competence—teaching students how to do things with texts—often is subordinated in programs with heavy coding or comprehension emphases.

Finally, our assumption is that ostensibly successful programs might make one just literate enough to get in real trouble. That is, one could master the code, learn to make meaning, learn how to read contexts just enough to be ideologically deceived in a text-based culture and economy that attempts to define and position us at every turn. Here we have tried to offer teachers an alternative to the conventional approaches of identifying bias and stereotypes to, once again, focus students' view of texts both on technical detail and on social context. By asking who could have written or read this text—naïvely and unproblematically—we are asking students to second guess the conditions of text production and of text reception. If they don't like a particular text, for example, we can encourage them to speculate on what kind of person, in what kind of cultural or historical context, might have written such a text. Further, we can encourage them to focus on how a text might indeed construct its ideal reader: A particular class or group of people might indeed prefer such a text, or find their interests and desires represented in such a text. Finally, the focus on "what a text is trying to do to me" opens up discussions of the intention, force, and effects of texts upon particular audiences.

A secondary school example

Critical literacy programs have been undertaken at all age and grade levels in Australia. Adelaide primary school teacher Jennifer O'Brien (1994) describes working with year 1 students to "teach them to inspect their mothers' junk mail and ask questions such as Who was this written for? Whose parents are omitted? What is this text trying to do to me? In other instances, students are engaged in critical literacy activities to navigate the redundant and untrustworthy texts encountered on the Internet (Lankshear & Snyder, in press). What follows is a capsule critical literacy lesson that many of our beginning teachers use in secondary schools. It illustrates many of the approaches described here. Please note that its implementation

will require some knowledge of critical discourse analysis. To use it, you would need to add some selected textbook passages for analysis.

Lesson: Analysing textbook ideologies

All text uses a variety of textual devices to (a) textually construct reality (a possible world) and (b) position readers (in a relationship of power to that possible world). These include some of the following devices:

- ***Lexicon***: The wordings, namings, metaphors, and meanings that authors use make for a textual "classification scheme." This scheme constructs a version of the "possible world" of the text [including pronominalisation, and the use of *we, us, they* to construct the self, the other, and everybody else].
- ***Syntax***: Syntax constructs agency and foregrounds who is doing what to whom. The use of the passive and active voices, the use of modality, and the use of different sentence modes (e.g., declarative, imperative, interrogative) to describe the world in particular ways that foreground actors, actions, and affected entities differently (e.g., "I hit you" is a different account of an auto accident than "You were hit").
- ***Cohesive ties***: Of the various kinds of cohesion (e.g., conjunctions, referents to other words in the text), we looked at linking words (e.g., *thus, therefore, but*), which show logical relations between propositions and ideas, and deictics (e.g., *then, now, there, here*), which show reference to time and space.
- ***Discourses***: A range of discourses—systematic clusters of themes, statements, ideas and ideologies—come into play in the text. These set up intertextual relations, allusions, and references to other texts in the reader's environment and to other texts she or he might have read previously. How wordings, statements, and discourses are set up in relation to one another (e.g., as opposites, equals, or hierarchies) influences the message of the text.
- ***Top level/generic/propositional structure***: The larger "chunks" and units of a text—beginnings, middles, ends—that usually have particular cultural and ideological values built into them and into how they are sequenced.

Textbooks: The school textbook—whether basal (beginning) reading series, or high school history book—is a distinct genre with various characteristics. We are taught and like to think of textbooks as authoritative sources of knowledge, as clear bodies of "truths" and "facts" written objectively, dispassionately, free of bias. But by now you've become aware that all texts textually construct reality (field) and position readers to read in particular ways (tenor). Like any newspaper or magazine article, textbooks position readers in relation to a particular world view of *ideology*. This is a simple fact of life about texts: They take and project particular ideologies, a "selective tradition" of culture, and they silence others. But while it is easy enough to say that a textbook expresses a selective tradition of culture, it is more difficult to explain how the language of the textbook includes and omits particular values, versions of human identity, human action, histories, races, cultures, and social classes.

Let's discuss a textbook passage line by line. (Source: *Australian Geography*, Robert Ritchie, 1990, Sydney: McGraw-Hill, pp. 84–85. Reprinted by permission.)

1 We will start by discussing some general types of impacts on the physical environment.

2 We will then look at particular types of environments, such as coastal

3 lands, alpine areas, arid lands and cultural sites.

4 The construction of a resort or a complex of resorts and facilities is

5 the most obvious of tourist impacts.

6 Very significant changes in land use result.

7 Areas of natural vegetation might be cleared.

8 Existing land-uses such as agriculture might be displaced. Older parts of cities might be demolished.

9 One very important fact to remember is that natural environments

10 (such as mangroves, rainforests and water catchments) are valuable in their natural states.

11 They all play a part in the ecological processes from which we benefit.

12 It is now recognised that ultimately these ecological processes provide economic benefits.

Lines 1 & 2. Who is *we*?

Lines 2 & 3. Are all the items on the list equivalent, opposites, or dominant? How do *cultural sites* fit in with the other things on the list?

Lines 4 & 5. *Most obvious* to whom? Note the nominalisation *construction*; who is doing the construction? Does the nominalisation (a verb turned into a noun) hide the agent, the "doer" of the action?

Lines 4–8. Note use of passive: Where is the agency (developer)? Who is doing this?

Line 9. Who is supposed to *remember*?

Line 10. Notice again the list: Are these equivalent items?

Lines 11. Who is *we*?

Line 12. Recognised by whom?

My reading of the ideology: This is a very tricky passage. The major discourses brought into play are the discourse of geography, the discourse of "green" ecological politics, and the discourse of tourist development. They're put together in what appears to be a cautionary, antidevelopment, pro-ecology position. However, a couple of clever lexical choices and grammatical devices are used. First, by the use of *we* the reader is positioned to read as someone who benefits from nature and the economy. Then, the actual developers and those who would profit from both tourism and agriculture are removed by the use of the passive and lots of nominalisations (e.g., *development, construction*). Notice that all of this is just "going on," with all the human agents having been hidden or removed from the passage. (Remember two key questions: Who is absent from the text? What isn't being said?) Finally, the wordings and sentence structure in the last two lines mark out ecology and economic development as equal concerns. So what appears to be a pro-ecology passage can be read (by me at least) as a pro-development passage, as a "selective tradition" of prodevelopment ideology. That's my reading, one of many possible.

Task: As a tutorial group, go through the selected textbook extracts and discuss the particular discourses and ideologies that are at work. Here are some key questions to briefly ask of each:

- Which/whose version of events and the world is foregrounded?
- Which other versions are excluded? Whose interests are served by this representation?
- How (e.g., lexically, syntactically) does the text construct "reality"?
- How does the text try to position you in relation to its messages?

Practicing critical literacy in educational systems

I began with a question about how and when potentially radical educational innovations and projects actually might make a difference. Philosopher Herbert Marcuse (Wolff, Moore, & Marcuse, 1965) used the term *repressive tolerance* to describe how modern, democratic capitalist states deal with dissent. He argued that instead of suppressing critique, the strategy developed in modern nation states was to tolerate it and therefore appropriate it, to mainstream it and thereby steal away its potential threat to existing economic and social relations. The interesting question that Marcuse's work raises is whether in the process of getting critical literacy into state schools, we have watered down its potential for consequential social analysis and action.

An answer depends on how we envision the normative possibilities and limits of a critical literacy agenda. For genre-based approaches and for a pedagogy of multiliteracies, the principal aim is to enhance students' capacities to design social futures, to forge self-determining, "agentive" pathways through text- and discourse-based communities and economies. At the same time, the Freirian agenda places great stock in the capacity of critical literacy to query and disrupt these same economies, and to mobilise larger social movements toward progressive, if not revolutionary, social transformation. How we gauge the success or the assimilation of critical literacy into state schooling depends largely on how we negotiate its goals and possible consequences.

Thus far the development of critical literacy in Australia has been steady but uneven, with backlashes, critiques, and no small amount of dispute among its advocates. In this context, many Australian students and teachers are engaged with the theories and practices I have described here. Versions of critical literacy are included in the language and literacy syllabuses in most states. The four resources model has been adopted for use in New South Wales, the largest state. In 1991, the federally funded "Christie Report" (Christie et al.,

1991) advocated the inclusion of functional grammar and genre study, critical literacy and text analysis, and second-language acquisition models and Vygotskian psychology as core components for teacher education. It generated national controversy among literacy educators. Although the report never formally won government adoption, most Australian teacher education programs now feature these components. Most recently, the federal government has moved strongly toward national benchmark standards and a standardised testing régime, claiming a crisis in the form of falling standards. This move—the manufacturing of a literacy crisis as a rationale for shift in public policy—has been part of a broader attack on state schooling and a shift in funding strategies toward Australia's large state-supported independent and religious school sector (Luke, Lingard, Green, & Comber, 1999). In 1999, there was a brief controversy over the inclusion of many of the kinds of semiotic and critical literacy approaches noted here in the required Senior English Syllabi for Grades 11 and 12 in Queensland. A major critique came from those who argued that many teachers were not ready for the transition from cultural heritage and personal growth models.

What sets Australian approaches to critical literacy apart has been their insistence on direct instruction in a sophisticated technical language for talking about text. In the case of Queensland and, for a time, New South Wales, this meant the introduction of functional grammar and genre analysis (for background, see Unsworth, 1999). This has had two key effects. First, it has enabled many teachers and schools to show conservative parents and communities how their children are engaging with grammar, language structure and use with a depth that their own schooling hadn't provided. Second, it has developed a constructive pathway between the most volatile issues that have polarized North American literacy education. Australian approaches to critical literacy have, whether through intention or simple teacher commonsense, moved to blend (a) direct instruction in ways of talking about texts with an emphasis on immersion and engagement with whole texts and substantive contexts and (b) explicit (reproductive) introduction to how conventional genres work with an (counterreproductive) emphasis on critique and transformation of these same genres, their ideologies, and the social fields where they are used.

There is evidence in the Australian research cited here that many classrooms are engaging students in talk about contemporary social issues and ideologies in the context of learning how to handle texts in more complex ways. Different kinds of literate practices are being produced in many classrooms. However, the larger and more persistent question for critical educators, and for governments committed to equity, is whether any of these classroom and curricular differences are making a difference in the life pathways of students and, indeed, whether those students marginalised by traditional approaches to literacy are any better off (Freebody et al., 1997; Comber, Hill, Louden, Rivillard, & Reid, 1998). The search for definitive empirical evidence on the efficacy of critical literacy programs is underway. The problem is that while there are extensive qualitative descriptions of change, most of the conventional indicators of literate success—standardised tests—are themselves biased toward very different operational definitions of literacy.

For what it's worth, reading achievement test scores in Queensland have been improving (Queensland School Curriculum Council, 1999), but whether and how this is attributable to any of these innovations is moot. It is only when we develop rich task-based, teacher-moderated assessments of the literate practices and textual products of students—a project we are currently working on—that we will be able to see the results of particular approaches to literacy in terms that are somewhat more appropriate to their aims and possibilities. How a state educational system evaluates and gauges approaches that ask to be judged on their realization of social transformation and change is, obviously, way beyond available régimes of surveillance and evaluation. Whether anything can be made to count that can't be counted in educational systems is the vexing question facing governments with declining resources for state education. I can just imagine someone trying to run quality assurance checks on the production of socially transformative citizens.

To conclude, the approach to literacy described here is a two-tiered strategy. First, it emphasises teaching students from the most at-risk groups about the practices and processes of exclusion

and inclusion in social fields—that is, it has a strong emphasis on developing an analysis of power. Second, it emphasises direct instruction in the workings of mainstream texts of significant exchange value in these social fields—from canonical educational forms, such as the scientific essay, to those aesthetic and functional texts that might have consequence in students' further education and occupation. Yet its single most important theoretical and practical classroom effect is its shift in emphasis from the traditional view of literacy as skills, knowledges, and cognitions inside the human subject—quite literally as something in students' heads—to a vision of literacy as visible social practices with language, text, and discourse. This social "externalisation" of literacy acts to preclude "deficit" models of literacy. For as long as we locate literacy within human subjects, we will invariably find lack and deficit.

Once we relocate literacy in the visible domains of language and social life, we can redefine the project of critical literacy as one of access and equity. The educational point, made repeatedly by Gee (1996, 1999), is that people bring variable discourse repertoires to bear in these contexts—curious, often unpredictable mixtures of community-based, specialized academic, and technical discourses. The practical pedagogical task is about teaching students to use discourses to "read" and critique other discourses, about developing languages for talking about language, in ways in which those students whose access to multiple discourses (from communities, from diverse cultural backgrounds and life histories) might have been viewed as lacking can be taken as part of their toolkits for making sense of the world—taken and augmented, expanded and blended with new school-based discourses.

Speaking as a bureaucrat in a state system, for me the task is about shaping the policies and curricula for literacy education in ways that open access to these fields where texts and discourses matter for all students. It is also about envisioning how students might be active, powerful, and critical users of texts and discourses in text-based economies that are, for much of the population, not only increasingly risky and uncertain, but also complex and fraught with new kinds of difference. Given that educational policy and administration in current conditions principally is about regulation of the flows of discourse and material resources across systems, it is all too tempting to believe that such tasks can be achieved through direction from the centre.

Can one move an educational project that engages with critique of the worlds of work, community life, government, media, and popular and traditional cultures into the mainstream of state-mandated curriculum? Or perhaps this is the kind of logical paradox that Bateson (1999) once described as a double bind: To require teachers and students to be critical in a state system might be a bit like the paradoxical injunction "be spontaneous!" The jury is still out. But perhaps I began with the wrong questions. For what we've seen in Australia is not a single project, a dominant approach to critical literacy, but teachers and students blending, shaping, and reshaping theories and practices in complex, clever, local, and innovative ways. The capacity of teachers to engage with theory and the capacity of intellectuals—educationists, linguists, sociologists, psychologists, feminists, literary theorists—to talk theory in accessible ways has been crucial. Not surprisingly, there was no outstanding state or federal policy or legislation that enabled the developments I've described here. Perhaps the key factors were a system that did not vest high-stakes testing and assessment around reductionist measures that would have precluded this development—and a teaching force able and willing to engage new theory to advance its professional judgment and expertise.

Perhaps it is not a question of whether and how government might bring "critical literacy" under an umbrella of state curriculum policy, but rather a matter of government getting out of the way so that "critical literacies" can be invented in classrooms. Perhaps it is absence and silence from the centre that enables.

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But will it work in the heartland? A response and illustration

Instant Messaging technology is an example of the multiliteracies teenagers use.

In their article published in the *Harvard Educational Review*, the New London Group (including three of the authors in this issue of *JAAL*: James Paul Gee, Carmen Luke, and Allan Luke, 1996) proposed a framework for teaching in New Times. We read the article when it first came out and sensed its impending significance—but at the time we could not wrap our minds around the meaning of "New Times." Its shift in emphasis from text to design was a conceptual change we weren't ready for, having just begun to think about how forms of popular culture and technology intersect with learning in formal and informal settings.

What has happened to us in the intervening years has probably happened to many *JAAL* readers. Like it or not, we have entered the world of the Internet—as teachers, researchers, and, for some, as parents. We have witnessed multinational mergers of information and entertainment technologies. We have been flooded with images from popular narratives and media—the indelible iconography of a blue dress or a Teletubby. We have seen the faces of ethnic cleansing and heard the euphemistic discourse of smart and precise bombs. The juxtaposition of these disparate images and technologies sends us reeling, but it does not have the same effect on the teenagers we know well, who have come into literacy and life in the midst of new technologies. Competing images don't confuse them as they do us.

For instance, one of us has teenage sons who admire both Woody Guthrie for the political messages in his music *and* Marilyn Manson

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for what they see as his critical stance on gender identity. They humor their English teachers' romantic visions of "the writing process" and "the writer's life" knowing full well that they will return home to multitask their way through their assignments—with word processor and Internet open, phone and CD at hand, a book or two in their laps. New Times, indeed, and times that will be more easily accessed by those who have the resources—which brings us back to the New London Group and the set of articles in this volume. All these articles include pedagogies that teach students to examine either the semiotics or the political economy of popular cultural forms, including popular technologies, thus inviting critical readings of access, resources, and symbolic codes.

The New London Group advocated a pedagogical framework that includes four approaches relevant to the articles in this themed issue: situated practices, overt instruction, critical framing, and transformed practice. Situated practices involve immersion in local discourses with attention to the lifeworlds of individuals within a particular community of learners. The New London Group referred to situated practice as "mastery in practice" (1996, p. 84), noting that individuals acquire knowledge and practice its application in particular sociocultural settings. Overt instruction is the sort that guides and scaffolds the learner's metacognitive and metalinguistic awareness, leading to the conscious control of knowledge that does not develop through immersion. Critical framing is the act of situating knowledge within its social, cultural, historical, and political contexts. Teaching students to read texts for their ideological underpinnings would be an example of such framing, thus helping students to develop critical awareness of how knowledge is constructed and whose interests it serves.

Finally, transformed practice recontextualizes meanings, breaking down naturalized frames of reference and constructing new meanings in new social spaces. It is this practice that enables the learner to productively work with the tension derived from the juxtaposition of two opposing discourses. Although the theoretical grounding for these practices can be found in the sometimes esoteric language of cultural studies, feminist poststructuralism, critical social theory, and critical discourse analysis, all of the authors represented here provide pragmatic and accessible applications of these theories.

Alvermann and Hagood (pp. 436–440) focus on situated and critical practices. They are careful to value the lifeworlds that Max and Sarah represent and to show how these adolescents' particular versions of "fandom" should be understood as agentic and discriminating rather than duped or swept away by media and marketing. When they talk about implications for teaching, they emphasize that the teacher should start from a position that acknowledges students' pleasure in particular forms of popular culture and respects students' judgments. Yet the move from this situated perspective—existing as it does within the immediate lifeworlds of the students—to a more critical framework is a crucial step to take in media education. Alvermann and Hagood delineate several approaches to a critical framework, but the goal in all of these approaches is to help students examine the political economy of popular consumption, how group affiliations influence consumption and taste and how systemic power differences result in the privileging of particular tastes over others. These processes are connected at the local level to social and cultural group identities and at the global level to multinational corporations that have influence on a wide range of audiences and geographies. While forms of popular culture can be oppositional and resistant, they are also coopted by and reproduced through the very authoritative structures they oppose, and this is a paradox that the pedagogy suggested by Alvermann and Hagood would address.

Carmen Luke's article (pp. 424–435) moves through all four practices within the New London pedagogical framework as she describes the teacher education course she designed. The lectures represent overt instruction, providing students with the metalanguages needed to understand the semiotics of various forms of media and technology. Tutorial groups provide students with situated practice within a smaller self-selected community of learners who make sense of the lectures in relation to their lived realities. The assignments require that students critically frame their learning by considering the social and cultural constitution of the media and technology sites they examine. In addition, they engage in transformed practice by using the critical frames

they develop to evaluate technological tools for use in their future classrooms. Luke characterized the shift in her students' thinking from an understanding of "knowledge as transmission" to an understanding of "knowledge as design." Building on the New London Group's conception of knowledge as design, this course directs students' attention to the structure and order of existing designs (through semiotic readings) before engaging them in the process of designing images and texts as they redesign contexts for their use.

Allan Luke's article (pp. 448–461) focuses closely on critical frames and transformed practices in its discussion of Australian approaches to critical literacy. As Luke explains, for the last decade historical and political conditions in Australia have made it a conducive context for critical approaches, which now include developing in students an understanding of the social nature of genre as they write within and against permeable generic forms. This article demonstrates how a curriculum can be designed for New Times through an emphasis on critical literacy that focuses on analyzing how texts work. Rather than directly addressing issues related to social justice, this approach to critical literacy seeks to make textual codes available to students so they are compelled to examine the ideological underpinnings of the texts they read and come to understand how texts promote or silence particular views. Rather than viewing the interaction between reader and text through a cognitive lens, Luke argues for an approach that shows how cognition is constituted in the cultural, focusing, for instance, on such questions as "For what kind of reader was this text constructed?" Such critical framing is especially important in light of the social identities students form as they interact with multimedia and other forms of popular culture. In order to prepare students for the influence of global economies on the distribution and consumption of texts and other resources, students must know how to read and revise popular technologies through critical framing and transformed practice.

At the risk of oversimplifying, we want to suggest that Carmen Luke's and Allan Luke's articles foreground textual analysis, whereas Alvermann and Hagood foreground audience analysis. In arguing for a combined text/audience approach to media studies, the cultural studies theorist Jere Paul Surber notes that research on audiences in media signaled an important departure beyond a focus on the text itself. As he pointed out, however, "such approaches must not lose sight of the facts that readers not only produce interpretations of texts but are produced as subjects by the texts they read" (Surber, 1998, p. 245). As educators from the U.S. originally trained in a personal growth model of language teaching and learning, we often feel conflicted about the role of language arts teachers in negotiating how much emphasis to place on how texts position readers and how much emphasis to place on how readers can reconstruct meanings in texts. It seems to us that one of the most important roles a teacher can serve when participating in discussions of media texts is to *mediate* the text in critical ways, helping students to traverse social and institutional discourses—the discourse of the dominant popular culture as well as the official and unofficial discourses of the classroom. The difficulty of this kind of pedagogy lies in the ease with which it can tip the balance toward teacher-directed practice. Yet the role of the language arts teacher has long been ambiguous in that the teacher is cautioned to lead without squelching individual freedom. Gemma Moss (1989, 1995), who writes about critical theories related to literacy teaching, pointed out that a humanistic pedagogy is no less ideologically based than a critical pedagogy. As educators, she argued, we need to acknowledge that we want students to read texts in certain ways because we hope to have an influence on what sort of people our students will become. Related to this set of articles, when we think about the people we want our students to become, we realize that, in part, we want them to use media and technology for their own important purposes. However, we also want them to learn to engage in critical readings of media and technology—readings that make visible the social and institutional ideologies at work.

We turn now to an example of multiliteracies in New Times from the midwestern U.S. "heartland" where we live and teach. Our purpose in this article is not only to comment on the work of the other contributors, but also to show the relevance of their work to adolescents in a specific context, a place not known for cutting edge trends or technologies. Here we offer an example from our research on computer-mediated communication

among adolescent females in the U.S. Midwest to underscore the significance of the contributors' discussions of popular culture and technology. In our discussion, we examine the purposes served by a particular kind of Internet communication (Instant Messaging) in the life of one girl and her best friend, and we point to the need for new pedagogies that both incorporate and offer critical frames for new literacies.

Sam (all names in this article are pseudonyms) is a 13-year-old girl who lives in a small midwestern university town. She is European American and working class; her parents are both maintenance workers who place a strong value on education and feel it is important for Sam to have access to the Internet. Ideally, Sam and her 11-year-old twin sisters are meant to go online for research purposes, to enhance their typing skills, and marginally, to communicate with their friends. Sam's mother, who knows very little about the Internet ("I don't know how to get on it. They have to do it all for me!"), has gendered expectations that the skills will be useful if Sam wants to become a secretary. Sam's father, who is concerned that his daughters have a fast, upgraded computer so they can "stay ahead of the game, not just with the game," has grown increasingly concerned about the dangerous and time-wasting elements of computer communications, and has begun to place extensive restrictions on Sam's Internet options.

These restrictions are bad news for Sam. Communication is her main reason for being online. Indeed, it is so important for her to be electronically connected to her friends that she continues to log on whenever she can get away with it. After she comes home from school, Sam generally begins a ritual of computer communication that, far beyond wasting time from her point of view, sustains and extends her social network. Sam has a number of different electronic communication options to choose from as she sits at her family computer and logs on to America Online (AOL) for her 1- to 2-hour sessions each day. Each one of these options (e-mail, chat rooms, and Instant Messaging) serves a specific purpose for her in terms of the kind of tone and language she wants to use and the overall social and practical goal of the communication. We will focus our attention on her use of Instant Messaging (IM).

IM is for brief, casual, real-time communication with peers. Through an AOL Instant Messaging display monitor, Sam knows which AOL-equipped friends from her e-mail buddy list are online at a given time and can immediately begin communicating with any one of them. Although Sam could have up to 100 friends on her buddy list, her father, who controls the account, restricts her buddy list to 20 people. Often Sam is IM-ing Karrie, her best friend who recently moved to another midwestern city.

Sam finds IM-ing to be an especially satisfying activity that involves her with shared knowledge and intimacies, and allows her to observe the activities of her peers from a comfortable, if not circumspect, vantage point. What has been particularly interesting to us is the extent with which Sam negotiates language and social networks as she electronically communicates with her peers in real time. Instant messaging, we found, demands multiliteracies as it defines and mediates social status. Although we don't want to claim that through her Internet activities Sam engages in the critical analysis of language, we are finding the sophistication of rhetorical choices she makes during these minute-to-minute interactions very compelling.

Negotiating the language of IM

Rather than speaking in one voice, Sam is conscious of choosing different tones and language styles depending on who she's Instant Messaging. In discussing her online relationship with Karrie, Sam observes that she is not only able to talk about a richer variety of topics with her best friend due to the many reference points they share, but she also discusses these topics in a "softer and sweeter" tone. Correspondingly, she has observed her tendency to give shorter, more pointed answers to peers she has less interest in talking to. Karrie said about her special Internet relationship with Sam: "The only reason I really use Instant Messages is basically to talk to her. I mean, I talk to everyone else, but the only person I really like to talk to is her."

The girls feel that their bond influences the breadth, depth, and tone of their Internet messages. Other audiences result in a different set of language negotiations. Sam notes that she pays more attention to her spelling when she considers the person

she's addressing to be "smart," for example. Sam has even copied the "voice" of an Instant Message correspondent who accidentally got onto her buddy list, in order to maintain the connection:

> Sam: This girl, she thinks I'm somebody else. She thinks I'm one of her friends, and she's like "Hey!" and I'm like "Hi!" and I start playing along with her. She thinks that I'm one of her school friends. She doesn't know it's me. She wrote to me twice now.
>
> Bettina: So she's this person that you're lying to almost ...
>
> Sam: Yeah, you just play along. It's fun sometimes. It's comical. Because she'll say something like "Oh [a boy] did this and we're going to the ski house," or whatever, and I'm like "Oh God!" and like and I'll just reply to her. I'll use the same exclamations where she uses them and I'll try to talk like they do.

This kind of play brings to mind the critical feature of parody that Alvermann and Hagood discuss, citing work by Buckingham (1998). In creating a parodic imitation of the tone and content of the anonymous correspondent's message, Sam had to analyze how the girl's tone worked—how it accomplished its purposes.

Besides adapting her tone, Sam is also careful to adjust her subject matter according to her particular audience. In order to convey to a popular boy in another school that she is "cool," Sam pays attention to his choice of words and topics so as to "get into his little group of friends." She also has little patience for the language used in kid chat rooms, calling the speech and the typing cues annoyingly immature, with aimless discussions that never talk about things ("like what's going on") that are important. Generally, Sam observes the kind of language people are using online and appropriates language cues for specific purposes. "It's just the fact that I have access to it, and I get on every night," she says, "...and I watch other people talk to people."

Sam and Karrie use the technology to juggle numerous language styles and conversations at a time. Each conversation takes place on a separate window. These windows pile up as more conversations get started. Sam routinely converses with four to eight people simultaneously, while Karrie manages around 20 windows and maintains a buddy list of 90. In the IM environment, the drama unfolds by way of multiple narratives and intersecting social discourses. IM communications, although typed, mimic face-to-face conversations. They are peppered with a distinct shorthand lingo (e.g., how r u?)—often the shorter the better—and the norm is to type and send short, overlapping messages in the spirit of continuous interruption. IM users, for example, will even type and send a singular smiley face emoticon to indicate, despite the interruption, that they are still listening, even nodding in approval to whatever that person is saying. Adolescents at the computer routinely multitask—doing homework, watching television, and talking on the phone. As she chatted with Sam, Karrie was doing homework, eating ice cream, listening to the radio, and IM-ing 22 peers. Instant messaging, accordingly, cannot by its splintered nature lead to extended conversation.

Negotiating social networks

As she juggles messages and language styles, Sam believes she is enhancing her social relationships and her social standing at school. Because chatting is so easy for her, Sam finds herself talking "a lot more" to friends than she would otherwise have time to in or outside of school. When asked why IM-ing is immediately better than the telephone or face-to-face equivalent, Sam and Karrie both agree that their online conversations erase awkwardness:

> Karrie: Yeah, I don't like the long pauses, like we don't really have pauses, like for people that I really don't know as well, then you just sit there [when talking in person] and go, "Uhhhhhhh..."
>
> Sam: And you don't know what to say...
>
> Karrie: And [it] gets a bit awkward.

Without having to worry about unwieldy, gaping silences, Sam says she not only talks to friends more, but she does so with more ease than she could muster on the phone or in person. This ease of communication is particularly useful when talking to members of the opposite sex; there is no fear of turning "bright red" or running out of

things to say. "You can always think of something," Sam says. IM-ing also seems to encourage a kind of openness not apparent with telephone calls and face-to-face interaction. The appearance of intimacy allows boys to tell Sam and Karrie more than they normally would:

Sam: You get more stuff out of them. Yeah. They'll tell you a lot more, 'cause they feel stupid in front of you. They won't just sit there and...

Bettina: So it's a different medium and they can test themselves a bit more and...

Sam: So they know how we react and they don't feel stupid 'cause they don't have to think about the next thing to say. I can smile [using an emoticon] or I can say something to them.

Turkle (1995) related similar findings in her discussion of a 14-year-old boy who felt online flirting far surpassed the real-life equivalent. "At parties, there is pressure to dance close, kiss, and touch, all of which he both craves and dreads" (p. 226). On the other hand, the illusion of anonymity that computer-mediated communication provides can encourage some individuals to take risks they wouldn't ordinarily take (Gumpert & Drucker, 1998).

In general, Sam and Karrie believe that their IM relationships enhance their social status, establishing a kind of social currency that keeps them in the know. Karrie thinks that being online makes her more popular in some peers' minds. "It depends on how you use it," Karrie says. "Like sometimes things happen on there, like funny things, and then you get better friends because of things you can talk about." Sam, who plans to switch schools in the fall from the local parochial middle school to the public high school, says she's been using IM in order to get to know some kids from the new school, and learn about "their inside jokes and stuff" and other pertinent social gossip. Knowing who is popular and who is going out with whom will allow her a smoother transition and will in turn guarantee a more solid social network when she starts school.

So as not to appear a "loser" with no other windows to juggle, and in effect, no other friends to keep her preoccupied, Sam chooses to wait a certain amount of time before typing her responses and is careful not to send messages to the same person in succession.

Sam: Yeah, and if you're talking to the people from [her new school] that have tons of people on their buddy lists, and they're talking to five or six people, you can't be ...like "hello hello hello," like that, try to get them to talk to you, 'cause you know they're talking to all these different people and it gets annoying...

Bettina: And how do they know how many people you're talking to?

Sam: They don't, they just assume, 'cause I'm not, I don't say anything for a while, I don't answer their question....

The assumption, then, is that everyone is talking to at least three or four different peers. Withholding a response in this context is not considered an insult, but a status symbol. In addition, if someone from Sam's buddy list suddenly appears online, she sometimes waits until she is IM-ed first, especially if this person is someone she intends to impress. It would be a social gaffe, she thinks, if she were too immediately effusive. Timing is therefore a crucial signifier in the world of IM literacy.

Monitoring the IM landscape

Although Sam doesn't show much awareness of how she might be manipulated by the chat IM technology, she reveals her intricate understanding of how she and her friend can manipulate it for their purposes related to power and identity. Sam is quite adept at using the buddy list indicator to monitor her friends online and control her message flow. To combat excessive or unwanted messages, she often turns off her buddy list indicator so her friends can no longer tell that she is simultaneously online. Sam also tries to surreptitiously discover who is currently talking to whom and what they happen to be talking about by IM-ing inquiries to friends and asking them to report back to her. She passes along her own investigative information, adding to a web of online surveillance that complicates and adds intrigue to the basic IM exchange. Karrie went so far as to track her boyfriend into a chat room and assume the "male" identity of "snowboarder911" to try to find out what kind of conversations he was having. She

also investigated the girl who mistakenly thinks Sam is her best IM buddy. By researching AOL user profiles, Karrie found her age and geographical location. When Sam and Karrie choose to enter chat rooms that are not age specific, they lie about their age and certainly don't list it in their sketchy user profile so as to pursue "adult" conversations with older people. Indeed, the girls like that they can control the rhetorical contexts of their interactions, sometimes through the surveillance of others, and sometimes through careful consideration of issues related to status, age, and gender.

Media theorist Sefton-Green (1998) claimed that digital communication begins to blur the distinction between childhood, adolescence, and adulthood in the sense that these terms are defined by their social use rather than by biological age. Children and teens, for instance, interact with adults in chat rooms based on interest rather than age. However, Sam's desire to hide her age and Karrie's gender posing show that the social and power relations related to age and gender that exist outside the Internet adhere within as well. Other research suggests that gender inequities are actually reproduced through online communication, both in the length and number of conversational turns afforded to males over females (Herring, 1995) and in the regulation of topics that emerge from heterosexist assumptions (Silver, 1997; 1997). Yet, since the physical body is not present in Internet interaction, Sam and Karrie have more space for play, parody, and performance. They can manipulate their voice, tone, and subject matter to hide or transform their own identities and to monitor the interactions of others.

Because Sam and Karrie are aware that their moves are also being watched and regulated by their parents, both girls have become savvy in their ability to overcome the restrictions on their online communication practices. Sam, whose father disallows IM but allows e-mails, has learned that she can block her buddy list every time her father is at home and never receive IM messages in his presence. She and Karrie also rely on a number code system. When Sam's father walks into the room, she types a certain number and begins to write about (or do) her homework so that he won't think she's wasting her time ("It's kind of fun, 'cause your parents don't know what you mean, so if you wanted to tell them something you could make up anything you wanted to"). She also continues to IM her friends when her father is at work, but covers her tracks by flooding the tracking device with educational sites and adding his name to her buddy list so she can track any time he's online during his work day.

Sam is computer literate to the point that she knows more about the AOL computer controls than her father. When these controls need to be changed, he types in the master account password but she instructs him where to go. As we were videotaping Sam during an IM session, Karrie IM-ed for some advice. She had successfully located her mother's password but had not been able to figure out how to change her user profile in order to include a more expansive list of interests than her mother wanted her to include. Sam directed Karrie to a number of menus, and after 30 minutes of frustrated persistence (and calm encouragement from Sam), Karrie figured it out. GTG (got to go), Karrie typed, and signed off to her best friend—LULMTAS (love you lots more than a sister).

Educating for New Times

When we compare the sophistication of Sam's rhetorical choices to the simple linearity of the writing process as it is often represented in the classroom, we understand why so many students over the years have told us that they are bored by the pace and sequence of writers' workshop and that they fake their rough drafts after having completed final ones in a flash. Consequently, we are attracted to the promise of Beach and Lundell's (1998) claim that when their students participated in a computer-mediated communication exchange, they learned "writing and reading as social strategies" (p. 93), a finding in keeping with the patterns we observed in our time with Sam. Sam used Instant Messaging to bond with her best girlfriend and gain some measure of control in social relationships. With regard to gender, although Sam is not using her online chats to break down gendered frames of reference, she is using these chats to claim some control over her position in the male/female binary. With her body out of view, she is able to alternately observe, monitor, and engage the words and minds of boys.

Clearly, even in the heartland, we educators need to offer our students (whether they are preservice teachers or adolescents) multiliteracies for New Times. If we choose not to, then those students who have the resources to teach themselves at home will have privileged access over those who do not (Garton, 1997; Haywood, 1995). If we choose to do so, then the articles in this issue of *JAAL* provide us with specific strategies for critical and transformed practice. In keeping with these articles, we can study and appreciate the lifeworlds and social literacies that girls like Sam and Karrie bring with them to school. But, in addition, we must help students to critically frame their experiences and readings of media and computer-mediated texts. As Carmen Luke's article (see pp. 424–435) makes clear, students need to examine the ways that they are used by New Times technologies even as they use these technologies for their own social and linguistic purposes.

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